

Leadership in Black and White

*Practical Suggestions for the Church to Become a
Healing Presence Within Divided Communities*

TERRELL CARTER

Copyright © 2016

Pinnacle Leadership Press



www.pinnlead.com

Cover Photo

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any way by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author, except as provided by USA copyright law.

All rights reserved.

ISBN:
ISBN-13:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Word from the Author	1
1 Responding to the Opportunity to Serve	3
For Such a Time as This	
What are we standing for?	
2 Responding to Communities in Crisis	13
Three Responses to Ferguson’s Unfolding Tragedy	
Three Ways You Can Help Ferguson’s Residents	
The Need for a Seat at the Table in Ferguson	
The Type of Leadership Ferguson Needs Now	
Why Churches Must Assist in Ferguson’s Healing	
3 Responding to the Opportunity to See Each Other as Equal	35
When Doing Wrong is Right	
Where’s Your Yellow Ticket?	
4 Responding to Communities in Need of Reconciliation	51
How Your Congregation Can Encourage Diversity	
Three Suggestions for Racial Reconciliation in Your Church	
Restoration in Light of the Zimmerman Verdict	
5 Ways Your Church Can Respond to Urban Youth	
5 Responding to the Opportunity to Have Hope	69
A Day of Hope	
6 Responding to Communities in Need of Love	81
The Currency of God’s Kingdom	
Three Ideas to Keep Your Online Discussions Civil	
Resurrecting Martin Luther King’s Message of Love	
Facing Racism Head On	
Do You Legislate Your Beliefs or Live Them	
Going to the Zoo While Black	
God’s Grace Doesn’t Require Additional Rules	
7 Responding to the Opportunity to Do Better	111
Donald Trump wants to make America great again	
Who is Worthy of Our Compassion?	

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR



Two years ago, Michael Brown was shot and killed in Ferguson, MO. After witnessing the racial and social tension that arose from that incident, I wrote a column for Ethics Daily in which I shared my experiences as a black male who has lived most of my life in the St. Louis metropolitan region, as well as having worked as a police officer for the City of St. Louis.

My goal in writing that original column, and the others that followed, was to engage people in honest conversation about the racial and social challenges that our communities face and to provide simple solutions that anyone could incorporate into their daily practices in order to help combat those tensions.

I have the same hope for this book as I did for that original column. To bridge divides through simple and realistic actions that can be incorporated on a corporate or individual level.

This book is a collection of the columns that I wrote for various news and opinion outlets after the Michael Brown shooting. I have also included a handful of sermons that I have delivered in the past that specifically dealt with the racial and social tensions that plague us.

I didn't write any of the pieces to be academic in nature. I hope that they are easily accessible to everyone who reads them.

TERRELL CARTER

I would like to thank the outlets that gave me the opportunity to write the pieces that are enclosed. I say thank you to the editorial staff at Ethics Daily, Baptist News Global, and the St. Louis American for their support in publishing these articles in their various forms. Thanks to Mark Tidsworth of Pinnacle Leadership Associates for welcoming me to the Pinnacle team and giving me the space to express myself as a team member. Thanks to Helen Porth for taking the time to edit the book. Finally, thanks to Dr. Terry Rosell and Dr. Ircel Harrison who both encouraged me to put my ideas on paper and helped me make connections to get those ideas published. It is a privilege to call you both mentors and co-laborers at Central Seminary.

Terrell Carter
August 2016

*RESPONDING TO THE
OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE*



FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



Baptist News Global, December 22, 2014

In the Old Testament Book of Ester, we are told a story about how the very existence of a certain group of people was threatened because of the anger of one man towards them. This man made threats to wipe out this group.

He schemed and planned and plotted and made preparations, and even had the king convinced that this would be an acceptable idea. It seemed as if this man's hatred towards this group of people would be allowed to run rampant without any intervention from God.

Unbeknownst to him, God had placed a young girl named Ester in the position of queen, and when she heard of this plan to exterminate her people, she knew she couldn't let it happen. Her challenge was to figure out how to avert this disaster without putting herself in danger.

Eventually her cousin Mordecai approached her to petition the king for protection on the behalf of their people. Ester hemmed and hawed and gave excuses why she couldn't be the one to advocate for her people. Mordecai responded in a way that sends chills down my spine.

He told her, "If you remain silent during this time, God can surely still bring deliverance for our people through someone else, but what

if God put you in this position, this position of queen of this land, for such a time as this?”

“For such a time as this, you have been given a position of influence. For such a time as this, you have been given a connection with the most powerful man in the nation. For such a time as this, you have been placed in the perfect position to ensure deliverance for your people. You are who you are and you are where you are for such a time as this.”

I see similarities between the story found in Ester and the story that has been taking shape in our nation and our communities through the images and stories of racial, social, and political unrest.

We are under attack. All of God’s creation is under attack by spiritual forces.

Our cities are under attack through inequitable poverty, rampant crime, and racial dissension. Our local communities are under attack through a lack of education, sanctioned disinvestment, and political jockeying. Our families are under attack. God’s kingdom is under attack.

As in the book of Ester, we need leaders for such a time as this. But, who will lead? Who will plead our cause? Who will stand up for our city, communities, and families? As Ester needed to hear those words from Mordecai, I believe that some of us need to hear those words for ourselves.

Can you recognize that God has brought you to this place where you are in life for such a time as this? Our cities, communities, and families need people who will speak prophetically and act locally on their behalf.

They need people who can think long-term while acting in the here and now, look for service opportunities instead of photo opportunities, have a community agenda instead of personal agendas, are other-centered instead of self-centered, seek the greater good instead of individual good, seek to find peace instead of spreading

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

anger, hate, and fear, and are willing to protect as much as they are willing to protest.

Are you willing to be one of those people? As I consider this challenge personally, I can't help but think of the words of Wayne Watson from his song "For such a time as this":

Now, all I have is now
To be faithful, to be holy and to shine
Lighting up the darkness
Right now, I really have no choice
But to voice the truth to the nations
A generation looking for God

For such a time as this
I was placed upon the earth
To hear the voice of God
And do His will, whatever it is

For such a time as this
For now and all the days He gives
I am here, I am here and I am His
For such a time as this

I believe that we all are where we are for such a time as this. We are here for justice, peace, and reconciliation.

WHAT ARE WE STANDING FOR?



Unpublished sermon, September 13, 2015

One of the more controversial news stories of 2015 was that of the county clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses to gay couples because she viewed homosexuality as a sin.

Our nation quickly divided along clear lines in response to her actions. Some people believed that she was wrong to take her stance because she violated the laws of the land by refusing to obey a ruling recently handed down by the Supreme Court. Others believed that she was right to refuse and shouldn't be forced to violate her religious conscious.

No matter the issue or question being considered, there are always going to be multiple sides to be considered. It shouldn't surprise us when people who belong to the same faith community have vastly different responses on any given subject.

There is a clear struggle going on in the community of faith. There is a struggle about what we believe is right as well as what should be considered true and faithful Christianity?

Varying opinions on how we are to live out our faith have been around since the early days of the Church. It's one of the things that the Church had to deal with in Crete. This was such an important

issue that Paul felt it necessary to express his concerns about this early on in the letter that he wrote to Titus.

Paul tells Titus that one of the reasons that he is writing him a letter is because there's the potential that varying, diverse, and weird ideas and teachings could creep into the lives and practices of those who made up the fellowship of local believers. Incorrect thinking could creep in through people from within their group and from people from outside their group.

These were teachers who apparently had a religious background, or an exposure to the principles that Paul had been teaching about Jesus as the Savior and God's desire to be in relationship with all of creation. Paul seems to be implying that these teachers knew what should have been taught and lived, but weren't doing it.

For them it wasn't enough to simply believe Jesus' words and life and eventually be baptized. You had to also become circumcised in order to be saved. So, if you were a Gentile, your faith wasn't enough to make you right with God. You had to have something extra to go along with it.

Paul wasn't accusing all leaders or teachers of being false. He was pointing out those who were on the extreme edge of falsehood; those who were taking advantage of the body and leading them astray.

They were leading people astray for money, and I also think for power, prestige, and position. It was clear that they weren't doing it simply out of love for God or God's people.

Paul tells Titus to take care of false teachers immediately so they don't get a foothold into the lives of innocent believers and their false teaching don't begin to affect other people unnecessarily.

Confront and remove people who are teaching old myths and traditions based on what people think instead of what God says, who make everything revolve around them and their philosophies, and who just aren't doing it God's way.

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

Jesus said that the most important commandment is to love God with all that you are, first and foremost. The second commandment is to love your neighbor just like you love yourself. So, I understand correct teaching to be anything that has these two ideas as its foundation.

If what someone teaches doesn't recognize God as creator and sustainer, and God's desire to be in relationship with us, or that we all have a responsibility to live out the love that we experience from God within the communities that we occupy and operate within, then that teaching has to be questioned.

Rightly, we usually attribute false teaching to scam artists and televangelists. We attribute false teaching to those who blatantly make money off of other people's faith and other people's fears.

Rightly, we say that false teachers take advantage of other people's desires to hear something from God and experience something personal from God. But televangelists aren't the only false teachers around.

What can false teachers and false teachings look like today? It can depend on what side of the aisle you're on. If you're a conservative republican, then false teaching may look like gay marriage. If you're a liberal democrat, then false teaching may look like the conservative efforts to stop the affordable care act.

My goal is not to make this a political conversation, but to show that even though we all claim the name of Christ, we all don't understand God's Word the same way. But, instead of separating along political lines, our privilege is to unite under the umbrella of God's love and desire to be in relationship.

Anything that denies God's love for all people or anything that puts humankind and traditions at the center of faith instead of God's desire to form relationships or anything that seeks to separate us from each other based on political preferences or anything that puts a political philosophy above the great commands to love God and love your neighbor has to be seen as false.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were scholars of their holy text. They could tell you the meaning of a word and all of the laws that related to that word or idea. They could parse and nuance a verb and noun and tell you what it did and didn't mean.

But for all of their knowledge and rhetorical skill, the majority of them couldn't see the Savior, the Son of God, standing in their midst and they failed to show compassion to the people around them.

They were so zealous about following the law that they failed to recognize and follow the true law giver; the one to whom the law pointed in the first place. In their minds, they were doing the right thing and that's what mattered.

How many of us are doing the right thing, but are missing the real point. The real point is loving God and others. If we aren't doing these two things first, then we are no better than the legalistic contemporaries of Christ.

*RESPONDING TO
COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS*



TERRELL CARTER

*THREE RESPONSES TO FERGUSON'S
UNFOLDING TRAGEDY*



Ethics Daily, August 18, 2014

Like most people who have seen, heard, or read about the series of events that have occurred in Ferguson, Missouri, I too have been frustrated and disheartened at the loss of a life, the unnecessary theft and destruction of property, and the weakening of trust between residents and government.

I have also struggled with how I should feel in response to such emotion evoking events. I struggle because I view the events that have transpired from what I think is a unique lens.

I am African-American. I have lived the majority of my life in St. Louis and am familiar with most of the smaller municipalities outside St. Louis. I have regular first-hand experience as a youth, and now a 40 year old father of two, of being pulled over by police officers of various departments in the St. Louis region.

I regularly experience the fear of driving through certain areas knowing that I will be pulled over by police simply because they think I don't belong in the area.

These officers don't care, or take the time to find out, that I am a pastor, a college professor, and the Executive Director of a

community-based service agency that has sought to improve the lives of people in North St. Louis City for 21 years. None of this is important to them.

In defense of these officers, I understand why none of this is important. I was a St. Louis City Police Officer for five years and my main concern was staying safe and making it home to my family in one piece every day.

I patrolled one of the City's most dangerous neighborhoods. I also worked in a special "undercover" detail driving an unmarked car in order to execute search warrants for drugs and guns on a weekly basis.

During my tenure on the department, I learned that some citizens didn't necessarily care about me as an officer or person.

These people didn't care that I was Interim Pastor of a church in the neighborhood, or a father, artist, or mentor to urban youth. They only saw the uniform and had a preconceived idea of who I was and what I should do for them.

On multiple occasions, I helped other officers defend themselves against people who attempted to take their lives. I was also helped by multiple officers as I defended myself against people who attempted to take my life.

Because of these experiences, I will never second guess the officer who is at the center of the firestorm. Having been in what I perceived were life or death situations, with only a few seconds to respond, I can sympathize with the officer's actions to defend himself.

That doesn't mean that I agree with, or justify, his actions. It only means that, if he believed that his life was immediately threatened, I can understand why he responded with force.

What is important to me right now is how we respond to the fallout from this event? What personal stance can we all take as we wait to

find out what really happened on that fateful day?

I have three simple suggestions that I believe can help us all.

First, allow your perspective to be influenced by the whole of information and not just bits and pieces. We all want to know what happened and why. Unfortunately, we will not receive all of the answers immediately.

Don't let your opinion be overly influenced by a lack of information and disinformation. As much as we may want to trust news programs, and bloggers, and people that tweet, we have to remember that they all have their own agendas when writing. Whether intentional or not, key information sometimes gets left out in order to influence our thinking.

Second, we have the opportunity to respond to all of this through a lens of love and compassion. We don't have to hate those who don't think and feel like we do. We don't have to vilify one another because we hold differing opinions about all of the different social and economic aspects surrounding these circumstances. We don't have to look for new enemies, especially during a time when unity and cooperation are needed more than ever.

Finally, as much as this event is about racial profiling, and about teaching our children the value of earning what they have instead of taking and stealing from someone else, and about respecting authority, this is also about the unseen spiritual fight that has been waging from the earliest times.

The fight between the forces of spiritual darkness that seek to control this world and have its inhabitants devour each other and the present yet coming Kingdom of God that seeks to shape all things into God's loving image.

What Ferguson, MO, and other cities and countries are experiencing is about more than just economic inclusion and racial equality. It's about who will control this world and our lives for time and eternity.

TERRELL CARTER

When we look at it that way, we can see who the real enemy is.

THREE WAYS YOU CAN HELP FERGUSON'S RESIDENTS



Ethics Daily, August 22, 2014

In 2014 the City of Ferguson, MO was transformed from an unknown sleepy town located in the northern portion of St. Louis County into the symbolic embodiment of multiple racial, political, and social struggles.

The incident and the subsequent fallout served as one more point of engagement for discussing what is wrong with America. On the hour local, national and international media pundits discussed the practice of racial profiling of minority cultures by predominantly white police departments.

Pundits puzzled over the lack of interest by African Americans in working in law enforcement. Experts debated the pros and cons of the militarization of local police departments. Civil rights leaders stressed the need for understanding the lack of trust for law enforcement commonly held within African American communities.

It is clear, that there are several things that need to be fixed in America, and Ferguson.

The fatal shooting of an unarmed African American teen by a white officer has placed Ferguson at the center, physically and literally, of a

whirlwind of controversy.

In the aftermath of the fatal event, local, national, and international media outlets began to flock to the community to provide much needed coverage of the story. Civil rights leaders made Ferguson Ground Zero for the fight for racial and economic equality. Celebrities walked side by side with community members.

All of this is important, valid, and probably necessary. But how did all of this affect the people that live in Ferguson?

Unfortunately, life for residents in Ferguson slowed to somewhat of a grinding and frustrating halt.

The beginning of the school year for the Ferguson school district was delayed in order to protect school children from potential violence during protests.

Residents had a hard time accessing stores because stores had provided their parking lot space for media and law enforcement vehicles. Businesses that previously operated under peaceful and quiet circumstances were hoping that people would simply remember that they were still open for business.

What can we, the neighbors of Ferguson, do to help the people who live there and care deeply about what happened, and have an opinion about all of the accompanying issues, but at the current time, want, and need, to move forward with their everyday lives?

I have three simple suggestions that I believe can help us all.

First, don't show up to Ferguson just to see what's going on. There is an overabundance of law enforcement, media outlets, and onlookers. This is making life for community residents more hectic and frustrating than necessary. There is a plethora of photos and videos of protestors and police officers available on the internet if you want to see what all of this looks like.

Second, if you do travel to Ferguson, go with the intent to lend a

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

helping hand. And, don't show up empty handed. Bring resources that are needed by community members. You can find out what resources are needed by contacting, or viewing the websites of churches, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations that are located in and serve that community.

If you choose not to travel to the area, contact those same organizations and find out how you can donate materials or funds to help with needs.

Third, seek to engage in the multiple ongoing conversations in ways that build community instead of destroying it. Hate towards others that don't see the circumstances the same way we do doesn't serve anyone. It only serves to add fuel to a fire that rages well on its own.

This story, the story of an African American youth, a police officer, and a city in crisis is far from over. There are multiple chapters that are left to be told. But, if we can help this community, and each other, instead of hurting, we can show what's right about humankind.

*THE NEED FOR A SEAT
AT THE TABLE IN FERGUSON*



Ethics Daily, November 21, 2014

As the City of Ferguson and the greater St. Louis Metropolitan region braces for the impending grand jury verdict related to the officer involved in the Michael Brown shooting, multiple questions still loom from commentators, bloggers, and chatroom veterans.

Why is this big deal to minorities? Why are minorities so angry, especially about an event that did not affect them personally? Why are minorities protesting what some would consider to have been a lawful and necessary response of force by a police officer? Why are some minority groups presenting themselves as victims trapped in an unfair system?

The simple answer is that these groups feel either unrecognized or powerless when events like the Michael Brown shooting occur and regularly search for ways to express their frustration when the people and organizations that are charged with helping and serving their community seem to instead regularly inflict pain upon those communities.

In the seminal text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the Latin American educator Paulo Freire discusses the intricacies, challenges, and

opportunities found within a society where one people group feels like they are being oppressed by another people group and how to change the dynamics of the relationship in order to stop the oppression and repair relationships.

Within the text, Freire defines oppression as essentially any action or set of actions that causes a person or people group to not feel fully human or to not be perceived as fully human. Racial profiling fits under this broad umbrella. Racially based disinvestment in certain communities also fits into this category. Marginalization also fits the description.

Based on the evidence of statistical data that has been accumulated and analyzed in the weeks and months following the shooting, there are multiple reasons for minority groups in Ferguson and the St. Louis Metropolitan area to feel like they have been oppressed simply because of the color of their skin or their residential address.

Please understand that I am not saying that people within the Ferguson community are oppressed in the same manner as the people living under communist rule who were studied by the author. But, the people involved in the Ferguson protests clearly feel like they have been marginalized in multiple ways that have made them feel less than human.

According to Freire, the first steps to working through the contentious relationships between the perceived oppressor and the perceived oppressed is for there to be a clear acknowledgement of the oppression. This acknowledgment needs to occur by all parties involved.

Those who are members of the group that has been perceived to oppress have the opportunity to listen to those who feel as if they have been oppressed and understand their points of view without trying to make the people that feel oppressed look like they are less than human.

Freire says that when oppressors are challenged, they will use specific language to begin to describe those who no longer want to be

oppressed. The oppressor will refer to the oppressed as those people, savages, subversives, violent, barbaric, or wicked. These are all words that we have heard used to describe those who have begun to fight against what they understand to be long standing injustices.

Although many of us may not personally oppress a particular people group, out of respect for all human life, and as an attempt to treat each other with dignity, their claim of oppression has to be recognized and explored, not just stepped over in hopes that the claim will be rescinded.

For those involved in navigating the challenges that will come when the grand jury verdict is announced, there is great challenge, as well as great opportunity.

There is the challenge and opportunity for transparent leadership. When I say transparent, I mean leadership that legitimately allows those who are affected by the issues that have been surfaced over the past few months to have a seat at the table to determine the future of their communities.

I offer three initial suggestions for creating and maintaining transparent leadership during these times.

First, leaders can invite members from the community to have a permanent seat at the decision making table. Participation that is permanent and not just temporary lasts beyond when the next election cycle has been completed.

Although the governor of the State of Missouri recently attempted to seek out more community input by forming a citizen based commission to address racial and economic concerns that have been brought up, his choices of high profile members raises the question of whether his selections were actually community-based or politically-motivated.

Community members should be invited to choose leaders that represent their interests and understand their concerns and desires instead of having leaders with political connections placed over them.

Second, leaders can invite and accept strategic suggestions on improving relationships from grassroots leaders, organizations, and community members that regularly serve the people groups that have been adversely affected. These people and groups better understand the concerns and complaints of those who believe they have been marginalized because they serve on the front lines with them.

Third, there is the opportunity for the political and jurisdictional leaders who are trying to plan for the fallout from the verdict to begin to participate in strategic relationships where minorities, grassroots organizations, and community leaders mentor and/or coach them so they can get firsthand views and explanations of how the communities feel and to better understand the concerns of the affected communities.

By attempting these basic first steps I believe that the perceived system of oppression found in the St. Louis region, as well as other parts of the world, can be chipped away and replaced with systems that help all parties involved feel fully human.

*THE TYPE OF LEADERSHIP
FERGUSON NEEDS NOW*



Ethics Daily, November 26, 2014

The grand jury decision related to the shooting death of Michael Brown has been officially released. Officer Darren Wilson has been acquitted of all charges in the case.

After the decision was announced people responded in ways that many of us feared. The lasting images that were captured by the media and broadcast throughout the world were of people causing destruction in communities that have already experienced enough loss. The looters made it hard for the people that were there to legitimately protest to be heard.

In the coming days, these communities who have lost so much will need help from people as they seek to rebuild and restore what has been taken from them.

They will need help from people that seek to add life and hope to their communities in practical, tangible ways. In the coming days, we all have the opportunity to respond to the needs of these communities.

We all can give funds and practical resources to organizations that serve the needs of the community. Local organizations, such as

www.iheartnorthcounty.org, are able to direct funds and resources to people and groups who can best use and disperse them, making sure needs of people are genuinely met.

In addition to resources, we have the opportunity to give leadership that provides light and hope where we so many have only found darkness.

As the dust begins to settle from the announced verdict, people on both sides of the issue will likely be looking for a voice or a person that speaks to them and the feelings that they have about all that has led up to this moment. Many will likely come forward to the Ferguson community and the world to present themselves as leaders of the people who feel disaffected by the verdict.

How will the community and the world vet these supposed leaders and their message in light of the delicate relationships at stake?

Amid corporate fear and personal struggle to do the right thing, I offer my hopes for the types of leaders that will arise during this time.

I hope for leadership that is not all-knowing. We need leadership that recognizes that as individuals we do not have the answer to every question.

I hope for leadership that is not individualistic. Everyone benefits from leadership that is not focused on personal agendas or personal desires to increase individual profiles.

I hope for leadership that is not opportunistic and "me" centered. Leadership is not a photo opportunity but is a service opportunity.

Instead, I hope for leadership that will seek the greater good of the entire community and not a singular people group.

I hope for leadership that will be collaborative and seek the input and opinion of people outside their own particular group in order to reach the overall goal of benefiting the entire community and moving us all into a positive direction of justice and truth.

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

I hope for leadership that will be other-centered and not self-centered.

I hope for leadership that will seek to find peace instead of giving in to anger, hate or fear so that one group gets its way.

I not only hope for these things, but I also offer myself as a willing participant and I challenge all who read this to do the same. May it be so for the sake of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

*WHY CHURCHES MUST
ASSIST IN FERGUSON'S HEALING*



Ethics Daily, February 26, 2015

Community relations have changed since Michael Brown was shot and killed by Officer Darren Wilson more than six months ago. There has been an increase in discussions about how police patrol urban communities, as well as more open dialogue about race, white privilege and their influence on how people view and respond to law enforcement.

Multiple investigations have been launched into how certain municipalities use the process of fines and court costs to bring in much needed revenue, typically at the detriment and expense of minorities and the poor.

Although changes are occurring, certain things are staying the same.

Communities that were already separated because of the issues that were simmering below the surface before the Brown shooting still have tensions within them. Violence has continued to occur, from further police-involved shootings to people ambushing and killing unsuspecting officers.

Certain police officers have continued to do things that bring suspicion on themselves and their profession. For example, a video surfaced recently of seven St. Louis City police officers arresting a suspect.

During the process of taking the suspect into custody, one of the officers said, "Hold up, everybody, hold up. We're red right now, so if you guys are worried about cameras, just wait." The officer then turned off the dashboard camera, leaving anyone who saw the video to wonder how much unnecessary force was used to take the suspect into custody.

Many people have asked what can the church do and say to help during these times. Some congregations have participated in town hall meetings. Others have made the commitment to begin relationships with other congregations that are made up of members that don't look like them. Still others have committed to being centers of reconciliation for the communities in which they are located.

In response to the question, "What can the church say or do to help?" some have responded with counter questions: "Should the church be doing anything? Is it really the responsibility of the church to engage in these tough conversations?" By the silence of many congregations, it would seem like the answer is "No."

I understand why some congregations are silent. Issues related to poverty, urbanism, discrimination, and injustice may not seem relevant to the world in which they live. Yet, as members of God's family, it is still part of our responsibility to make sure people are being treated the way God wants.

What can the church do to help people treat others the way God wants them treated? We can begin by speaking and acting prophetically. Not in the sense of predicting some supernatural event. Instead, we can share the message through word and deed that we have already received from God for such a time as this.

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

That message is: We are all equal before God, regardless of race, economic status, gender, professional employment or any of the other things that may separate us politically and socially. We all have a responsibility to reflect this equality in how we treat one another. Power, position and authority are not to be abused for any agenda.

When power is abused, we all have a responsibility to speak out against it. When we fail to speak out, we are showing our desire to preserve self over seeing justice done. God will hold us all accountable for our fidelity to God's desires for equality based on God's love expressed through the sacrifice of Christ.

*RESPONDING TO THE OPPORTUNITY
TO SEE EACH OTHER AS EQUALS*



WHEN DOING WRONG IS RIGHT



Unpublished Sermon, August 9, 2015

Have you ever tried to do the right thing for someone only to see your hard work backfire? Have you ever tried to perform a good deed for someone only to have that person or people around them question your motives?

If you're like me, you have to fight the urge to say, "I will never put myself out there like that again. I will not try to help that person again. I may not even try to help anyone else again, just so I can protect myself in the future."

Jesus experienced these types of things on a regular basis through the entirety of his ministry. During His lifetime, Christ was regularly questioned about His motives, misunderstood when he tried to do good things, accused of not being as nice or as helpful as he actually was, and more often than not, he regularly found himself in trouble with someone because of something he had done. In particular, he stayed in trouble with those who represented the religious establishment of his day.

In Luke 13:10-17, Jesus was accused of doing something wrong by the religious establishment. The passage takes place within a synagogue, the place where religious life for followers of Judaism took place. They prayed, studied, and participated in other specific

acts of worship there. It was a sacred place.

Within synagogue life, there was an ongoing practice of giving high priority to the act of following rules. From how to dress, where to sit, and who could read or speak, things were to happen in a particular way.

Synagogue life was based in the belief that God had given people rules to follow. God had given his covenant people commands to follow. God gave commands not to punish people but to help them manage themselves, as well as to set out the parameters of their relationships with each other and their relationship with the Holy One.

One of the commands that was given was to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy. The Sabbath was to be a time to acknowledge God's power and authority, and all that God had accomplished on the people's behalf in freeing them from their imprisonment in Egypt. So, the Sabbath was to be a day of rest and worship of God the Father.

One of the challenges of synagogue life was that certain leaders would take God's commands to an unintended extreme by adding their own ideas and clarifications to what God had already given. Some of their extreme interpretations confused what work and rest really were.

As humankind tried to clarify God's words, the results were that the spirit and reason behind God's commands were no longer as important as the fact that God had given a command. They missed the point that God was making by giving the command in the first place.

In this passage, Jesus is faced with multiple challenges to his authority and stature as a wise teacher.

First, the people at the synagogue probably thought they knew him because he grew up in the area and they can't get past that fact. They can't believe that someone with his pedigree can be as smart as he is.

Second, he came along teaching new things. He taught that he was the specific fulfillment of God's promises. He taught that people should put their ultimate trust in God through him, and not in rituals.

So, while Jesus is teaching among a crowd, a woman who had an ongoing disability comes into the synagogue and she becomes his focus.

She has not been well for 18 years. She walked bent over and couldn't straighten up. Imagine the pain, humiliation, and depression she felt. She likely came to the meeting place on a regular basis to lift up prayers to heal her body.

As a side note, I wonder how the synagogue leader felt about this woman's presence. She clearly needs and likely wants to be healed, but no one has been able to help her. No amount of prayer, offerings, or anything else has made a difference to her condition.

Jesus sees her, calls her over and says, "Woman, you are set free/released from your infirmity. You are made well/you are loosed." Jesus is able to make this woman whole instantaneously. He saw her need, and addressed it. I imagine everyone who knew her and saw this miracle praised God for the blessing, as well.

Well, everyone but one person. The ruler of the synagogue was not happy. Why was he displeased? Because Christ "violated" the command to keep the Sabbath holy and to not work. He protests that the woman could receive healing any other day of the week.

The first problem with this statement is that he is sticking to the letter of the law, and not the spirit of the law. This man is so stuck on what day of the week it is that he cannot see God moving before his eyes. In contrast, Jesus couldn't allow tradition to exclude a person from experiencing the loving touch of God based on a particular day of the week.

The second problem was that Christ's ability to heal the woman revealed a lot about the leader of the synagogue. If Christ could heal

her when she hadn't been healed before, what would be the point of anyone continuing to go to the synagogue?

Knowing that this leader was more concerned about keeping things status quo, Jesus calls him, and those like him "frauds." Dr. Bob Utley says, "We must be careful of our rules. They often become more important than people. People are priority with God. God made creation for fellowship with people! Our rules often say more about us than about God!

There are clear occasions where doing the wrong thing is actually the right thing. When the Holy Spirit prompts us to give of ourselves on the behalf of others, that is always the right time to do something wrong.

What we can learn from Christ's actions is that doing certain things, like having compassion for others, welcoming other people, and giving of ourselves to meet the needs of others, is more important than following a set of rules. Christ's love was not, and is not, bound by rules.

When you do these types of things you we will face some type of opposition. Not everyone will agree with you when you seek to welcome people and meet their needs or even trust your motives. No matter the opposition or consequences, we must see our actions as part of our service to God the Father in response to the love that has been shown to us.

Showing love is always more important than adhering to a tradition. Someone once said, "Law, or rules, helps order our world, but grace is what holds the world together." When our ways and traditions interfere with God's grace, a reevaluation must take place.

Rev. Todd Weir said, "Watch out for the voices of those who don't want healing to be done on the Sabbath. (Ask the question) What is the real agenda? Jesus calls us to unmask the hard-hearted agendas and realize the essence of the Gospel and the Law is compassion. All (of our) controversies must pass the test of the Great Commandment - to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind; and to

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

love our neighbor as ourselves.

May we be found being faithful in following them both.

TERRELL CARTER

WHERE'S YOUR YELLOW TICKET



Unpublished Sermon, August 23, 2015

The story *Les Mis* takes place in France between the years 1815-1832 and it is told through the eyes of several characters that are, for one reason or another, considered to be miserable. *Les Mis* is not a happy book or musical.

It's one of the most depressing stories that you may ever encounter. What makes it so depressing? It takes a realistic look at how the poor and socially outcast interact with those who live in high society, as well as other poor people.

Today, three characters from the book will hold our attention: Jean Valjean, Javert, and Fantine.

Jean Valjean is a man who was caught in the act of stealing bread so he could provide food for his sister and her multiple children. For violating the sanctity of community, he's sentenced to 5 years of hard labor in prison and on a chain gang.

In prison, he sees humankind's inhumanity through various acts and tries to escape his place of confinement multiple times, only to be caught over and over again. Every time that he's caught, more years are added to his sentence. What started as a 5 year bid balloons to 19

years of separation from his family. He spends 19 years performing hard labor; 19 years missing his sister and family.

The day comes when he is no longer physically imprisoned, but he no longer resembles the man that went in. He's changed, and not for the better. He's scarred physically, mentally, emotionally, and facing the challenge of starting over from square one.

Another character from the book is Javert, the prison guard who works at the prison where Jean Valjean is held. Eventually, he leaves the prison and becomes the director of a police department in a small town.

Javert isn't poor monetarily, but he experiences severe deficiency when it comes to showing compassion for others. Javert is one of those police officers that does everything by the book. And his book doesn't have a chapter titled "compassion".

He's a stickler for doing what's "right" or what's lawful. If it isn't lawful, he will not let anyone get away with it. It doesn't matter what the circumstances are. If a crime is committed, it must be punished. If an infraction occurs, it must be addressed.

The biggest irony of this character is that he legitimately believes that he is doing something good by being so rigid in his view and application of the law. He wholeheartedly believes in two things: God and the law. And in his mind, neither of them is merciful.

Another prominent character in the story is Fantine, a female factory worker who previously enjoyed an illicit sexual relationship with a socially prominent man. Unfortunately, after she becomes pregnant, he leaves her high and dry and penniless. Uneducated and unmarried, this single mother is the definition of poor and outcast.

In an attempt to maintain hope for a better future, she decides to leave her child in the custody of another family while she seeks work. She eventually gets a job at a local factory and pays the family to continue to raise her child.

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

She maintains the job until she rebuffs the sexual advances of another factory worker who is her supervisor. In shame and anger, this man waits for his opportunity to extract revenge against her. Eventually, he finds his opportunity. Somehow, several men within the factory find out about Fantine's illegitimate child and try to use this to their advantage against her.

After finding out about her love child, the rebuffed supervisor fires her. Without a job, she is forced to make money any way she can. First she sells her two front teeth. She then sells her hair. Finally, she sells her body.

Throughout *Les Miserable*, we follow characters who struggle due to their stations in life. Small mistakes bring big consequences followed by years of tension and pain. Careless decisions eventually carry grave consequences. And worst of all, we consistently see people not treating each other well. Mistreatment of others is a hallmark of the story.

There's a theme that runs throughout the story that stuck out to me. It is the idea of "pursuit". Throughout the story, someone, or something, is pursuing or being pursued.

Jean Valjean is initially pursued by the baker from whom he stole the bread to feed his family. He's then pursued and caught by the police. After going to prison, Jean is in constant pursuit of personal freedom.

He yearns to sleep in a real bed.

Eat a real meal.

Receive a decent shave.

This pursuit of freedom led him to try to escape multiple times. This led Javert and the other guards to pursue him again and again and again.

Eventually Valjean leaves prison for good. But it seems like he will be forever pursued by his past. He will never be able to get away from his prior mistake, because everywhere he goes, his past sin is staring him in the face. The sins of his past take a particular form.

After he obtains his freedom from prison, he must carry and display a yellow “ticket-of-leave” at all times.

This yellow ticket brands him as a former prisoner. Someone who has committed a crime, who is untrustworthy, vile, and an outcast. It represents all that his life isn't. All of the years he suffered are personified in this small yellow piece of paper. His past will forever cast a shadow over him that he cannot escape.

He eventually moves to another town under an assumed name becoming a wealthy business man and eventually the town mayor. But his past continues to pursue him. Javert, the by the book prison guard, becomes the lead police officer in that town. And so, the cycle of Javert pursuing Valjean to punish him for his past starts all over again.

Valjean is not the only person being pursued by the past. Fantine, the single unwed mother from the factory, is also pursued by her past. Every day, she's chased by the memory of the fling that produced her daughter.

She can't get away from the repercussions of being poor and raising a child as a single mother. She can't get away from the stigma that it encourages. Her coworkers expect that she will be open and accepting of their sexual advances towards her. They view her as an object.

Once she's fired, she can't find another job. Her life spirals downhill, until one day a man insults her and tries to take advantage of her. When she defends herself, she's arrested by Javert. And we know that he will have no mercy upon her.

Valjean and Fantine are not the only characters being pursued. Javert is a man on the run, as well. He is also running from his past. His problem is that he doesn't come from aristocracy. His father was a prison convict himself, and his mother was an imprisoned gypsy who gave birth while in prison. Ironically, the prison where Javert was born is the same prison where he worked and where Jean Valjean was held.

Because of the pain and shame that he feels about his pedigree, Javert renounced his parents and eventually became a guard in the prison in which he was born. He is constantly dogged by his less than honorable beginnings. His past will not let him sleep or rest unless he makes sure that he does something meaningful with his life. That something is to become the embodiment of justice.

The ideas and themes of Victor Hugo's novel are found in the Bible. In particular, the second chapter of the Book of James.

The church that James writes to was made up of converted Gentiles and followers of Judaism. Because of this makeup, there was a certain level of tension that they had to work through.

Within their society there was the belief that a person could become poor or have a lower social status because of personal decisions and personal sin. In reality, you could be poor, not because of something you did, but because of something someone did that affected you.

If you found yourself isolated because you were a woman whose husband died from natural causes, it would be hard for you to make a living for yourself, eventually leading to you becoming poor. Your land could catch on fire and all of your crops be destroyed, leaving you with no way to earn a living for yourself. Your sheep could be stolen by robbers, thus leaving you with no income.

Being poor encompassed more than just a lack of money. Being poor also encompassed being segregated to a lower social class.

Although they weren't wealthy, there was the potential for some people within the group to whom James wrote to make a public distinction between the rich and poor, the socially acceptable and unacceptable.

If a person from a higher social position came in wearing fly threads and sweet jewelry, they may be treated like royalty. They may be given the best seat in the building and treated like they were special.

But, if a person came in who occupied a lower social rung, there was the potential for them to be treated poorly. Instead of being offered a seat of comfort, they could be told to sit on the floor like a servant or slave.

If you didn't have the right social status, you could be treated like you were "other." "Other" means they weren't viewed as being equal to everyone else. And if you weren't equal, you could be treated any way the people felt was appropriate. James describes this process as "showing partiality."

The New Testament church had to deal with the same issues of Victor Hugo's day and ours: How do we treat one another, especially those who have a questionable social status?

James tells the church that God condemns them and their actions of partiality because God doesn't value material riches, or positions, or social status. Instead, God values the poor, downtrodden, and those who have excessive spiritual riches.

Instead of giving respect based on possessions or social status, the church was to love all people equally as the creations of God, each formed in God's image. In God's eyes, the miserable deserve as much love and respect as the rich or socially affluent because they too are God's children.

Although *Les Mis* is a fictional story, the points of that story ring true in many people's lives today. And, although James wrote his letter to believers many years ago, his words have a sense of freshness that is relevant today as well.

Some of us hold to the mindset that people who find themselves in difficult positions in life are there simply because of bad decisions they have made. We believe their lives are not as good as ours because of what they have done to themselves.

And we may actually be right in our assumptions. They may have made bad choices that have taken them down a path of no return. But haven't you done the same thing yourself?

Sometimes we forget the old adage “But for the grace of God, there go I.” The difference between your life and theirs has been God’s grace. That grace may have taken the form of loving parents who supported you and helped you during your times of need, but it was still God’s grace nonetheless. God’s grace may have even taken the form of good friends who watched over you during times when you weren’t as wise as you are now.

When we see someone of a lower social status than us, we can’t dismiss them as simply being products of their own decisions. People are more than just the sum of decisions that they’ve made throughout life.

People are the creations of God, no matter how broken or lost they may be. God wants them to experience the same grace that we have experienced. And we are the vessels for that grace to be poured out into their lives.

We are commanded by God to love all people equally. When someone who is “other” approaches us, we must interact with them as Christ would. This is a much bigger issue than referring to money.

When someone whom society considers as “other” based on their geography, nationality, race, political standing, dress, or anything else that fits on the list of reasons why we shouldn’t like someone, we should see them through the eyes of Christ, and they should see Christ looking back at them through our actions.

But, will you treat it like an opportunity to be filled with the Holy Spirit, exhibit the gifts of the Spirit, and live out your faith and not simply go through the motions?

For those who feel like you are “other,” you are worthy of God’s love and the compassion of God’s people just like you are. Throw away the yellow ticket and grasp the opportunity to rest in God’s presence.

TERRELL CARTER

*RESPONDING TO COMMUNITIES
IN NEED OF RECONCILIATION*



TERRELL CARTER

*HOW CONGREGATIONS CAN
ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY*



Ethics Daily, March 23, 2015

Based on the discussions that have been occurring since the release of the Department of Justice report on the behaviors and actions perpetrated by the police and courts of Ferguson, MO, one could say that our nation is still divided along multiple lines.

Religious and civil rights leaders of all races and nationalities have spoken out against the actions and attitudes of those in leadership in Ferguson, resoundingly condemning their acts as racist and predatory. On the other side of the debate are people who have said that the report is flawed and is simply the tool of a political administration that seeks to appease race-baiters and panders to one particular group of people.

Others have said that, for the good of all, we should punish those who have been implicated in the report and move on. We don't need to keep beating a dead horse. The things which have occurred in Ferguson don't happen everywhere. We're tired of hearing, reading and talking about it.

As this debate continues on, I am reminded that The Church can't point fingers at any other organization because we still have our own challenges to overcome.

Someone once said that Sunday is the most segregated day of the week. This may be hard for the Church to dispute. My personal experiences in ministry have sometimes reflected this.

I am part of an interracial family. We have been blessed to serve within multiple congregations in St. Louis, MO like Third Baptist Church, Webster Groves Baptist Church, and Broadway Baptist Church where our family make-up was not an issue. But, more often than not, when I am invited to speak at churches, the members of my family are not always welcomed equally.

In the past, whenever I was invited to speak at a historically black church, multiple members of those congregations wouldn't speak to my wife or shake her hand. Similar things have occurred at historically white churches. Earlier this year, I spoke at a white church and the gossip that ensued after we left was based on the fact that my wife was white.

Before I go any further, I want to make sure to say that I don't think that all churches that are primarily made up of one race are racist or segregated congregations. What I am saying is that one of the simplest evidences of our commitment to seeing and treating people as equals before God is through the diversity that is found within our congregations and leadership. That diversity is not only racial. It also includes gender and economic diversity.

How can congregations help to incorporate more diversity? The process can begin with an examination of the underlying culture of the congregation. This examination can occur by asking a few questions, answering them honestly.

Do you value people simply because they are God's creation or because of what they bring to your organization? Do you allow, empower and encourage people to lead based on the evidence of God's movement in their lives or based on what they look like, where they earned their degrees, or how that person's level of affluence can help your congregation become more popular or successful? Does the make-up of your congregation and leadership reflect the diversity

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

that we anticipate to see when we all meet God face-to-face?

Someone may ask the questions, “Are you saying that my church is racist if no people of color are attending or are in leadership?” or “Are you saying that our church is a sexist church if we don’t have women in leadership?”

No, that isn’t what I am saying. What I am saying is that diversity usually doesn’t happen by accident. It happens when we see all people as being created equal in the image of God and equal participation in the life of the body of Christ is given priority as a vitally important part of the process of completing the kingdom work that God has given to all of us.

TERRELL CARTER

*THREE SUGGESTIONS FOR RACIAL
RECONCILIATION IN CHURCHES*



Ethics Daily, June 24, 2013

I am a black man and I am serving as Interim Pastor at a white church. Not just any white church, but one that was started 100 years ago specifically to serve white people in a suburban area.

This is not the first time that I have served in a pastoral capacity at a white church. Ten years ago, I was called to be the pastor of a small dying white congregation located in South St. Louis, MO.

In the late 20th Century, the neighborhood surrounding that particular church transformed from being predominantly white and middle class to being black and poor. Due to various factors, the membership had dwindled. The remaining members realized that if the church was going to survive, it had to change. The first change was to call a pastor that reflected the make-up of the area. And so, I was called and served with pride. Within five years, the make-up of the congregation changed to reflect the make-up of the surrounding community, and the congregation grew.

The church where I currently serve recently celebrated 100 years of existence and I preached the celebration sermon for the Centennial event. Before that service, I glanced through multiple articles written for local newspapers about the church. One article in particular

caught my attention. This article contained a quote from a former pastor acknowledging that the church was originally formed to specifically serve white people in the area.

The irony of the situation was not lost on me. This church, which willingly kept blacks and whites separate 100 years ago was about to host an event where blacks and whites not only worshipped together, but a black man was serving in a pastoral capacity and delivering the sermon for the event. How times have changed.

I don't think that any of the members of these two congregations would ask for, or accept, applause for this. Instead, I think that they would all praise God that over time, people have come to understand that men and women of different races, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds are all equal before God.

Neither of these two congregations consider themselves to be special or unique. Instead, they see themselves as people who have adopted the principle that all of God's created people are equal and they have figured out ways to practice that belief within intentional community.

So, what does this mean for other congregations who seek to build relationships across lines of racial difference? What are some of the steps that congregations can consider in order to begin racial reconciliation with other communities?

First, congregations can begin by admitting that disparities have occurred in the past that have negatively affected certain people groups. This does not mean that you should try to take responsibility for what happen, but this will show that you acknowledge that there have been divisions between certain groups of people resulting in tensions which still exist due to those divisions. By doing this, it will show you are willing to work toward changing the future.

Second, acknowledge certain differences exist between groups of people. God has created us all differently and we have all been shaped by different cultural experiences. We worship differently. We sing differently. We practice our common faith in different ways. In trying to build bridges with those who are different from you, do

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

not try to be something you are not, and don't ask them to be something they are not. Recognize how you differ and learn to understand how those differences can be used to bring God glory.

Third, find ways to intentionally partner with those who are different from you at regular intervals throughout the year. Don't wait until black history month or Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday before you invite a black speaker to your church. Don't wait until Cinco de Mayo to invite a Latina to preach. Intentionally plan to invite people who are different from the make-up of your congregation, even when it's not an ethnic holiday. Also consider starting or participating in a joint worship service shared between churches of different ethnicities. At this type of service, choirs from each church can sing separately and together with leaders alternating preaching responsibilities. Through these types of services, both groups of people can learn to appreciate different ways of worshipping God.

My prayer is that by opening ourselves to spending time with people who are different from us, we will learn to see all people as God sees them.

TERRELL CARTER

*RESTORATION IN LIGHT OF THE
ZIMMERMAN VERDICT*



Ethics Daily, July 24, 2013

Now that we are over a week removed from the George Zimmerman trial, I am struggling with how believers have responded along racial and socioeconomic lines to the verdict. I have to admit that I am able to see both sides of the argument and understand why people think the way they do about the verdict. At various points in my life, I have occupied similar worlds that were occupied by both men.

Over ten years ago, I worked as a police officer. St. Louis was, and still is, one of the most dangerous cities in our nation. For five years, I patrolled some of its worst neighborhoods. I regularly saw violence perpetrated against people, making them feel powerless and forgotten. Most nights while on patrol, I did what was necessary to protect citizens and myself. Sometimes that involved using force.

On the flip side, my life perspective is influenced by growing up as a black man. As a youth, I was profiled for no other reason than where I lived, what clothes I wore, and what people I spent time with.

I am now 39 years old, professionally employed, and have served in various capacities of ministry for 22 years, and I still regularly get racially profiled, even in the neighborhood I have called home for

over eight years. Ironically, I patrolled this neighborhood for a year before I resigned from the police force.

I do not agree with how Mr. Zimmerman described Mr. Martin, or what seems to be Mr. Zimmerman's underlying disgust for "young punks." As a former police officer though, I understand why Mr. Zimmerman was suspicious of someone who fit the profile of people who had previously committed crimes in that residential area.

On the other hand, as a black male, I don't think my skin color, dress, or manner of walking makes me, or my own sixteen year old son, guilty of any crime and subject to harassment.

My other struggle is that now that the trial is over and the verdict has been determined, do I have a responsibility to respond to the commentators found on both sides of the argument? In the midst of protests that seem to be as much a general response of agreement or disagreement to the verdict, as well as an expression of years of pent up racial frustration, what should be my response? Especially I'm concerned about how to respond to those on both sides who respond in hate?

I believe my response, and the response of believers in general, should be one of restoration. Instead of separating over this, we have the opportunity to work together in order to restore relationships that have begun to be severed and communities that are becoming divided?

What do I mean when I use the word restoration? One of the ideas restoration carries with it is the thought that something which was broken or out of place is returned to its former state before it was changed.

A simple example would be a shoulder or disjointed limb that separates during exercise. It may be painful to get that limb back into its proper place, but that limb can't function as long as it is out of socket. After it's returned to its proper place, that limb will function as it was designed.

In light of the current circumstances, how can we restore relationships that are being painfully and publicly separated along racial and social lines? I can think of three ways. The first is to practice a spirit, or an attitude, of gentleness. Gentleness in how we respond to people who are engaging in the discussion.

People are understandably tense and frustrated, but that does not mean that as we communicate with them we have to express the same posture. Intentionally taking time to think through ideas and feelings before we verbalize them can help us avoid making an already heated discussion more volatile.

The second way is to see people as they see themselves. It can be beneficial to understand why someone holds the opinion that they have. Life experiences can actually be similar between various races and socioeconomic groups.

By learning why someone thinks the way they do, you may be able to put yourself in their shoes and understand their point of view is not necessarily based on race or socioeconomic factors. Instead, it may be based on an experience that you are able to relate to.

Finally, be willing to forgive. It may sound out of place for me to say that, especially since most Americans have not been affected by the tragedy in personal concrete ways like the actual participants and their families. What I mean is let go of the anger and frustration that has been building.

In your heart and mind, willingly spare the participants from your wrath. Exercise grace towards Mr. Zimmerman, and Mr. Martin, and the members of the jury, and the members of the legal teams. See all of them through the prism of God's grace and forgiveness as God sees you.

Restoration along these lines is going to be a painful process. Separation does not necessarily happen overnight, and it is not necessarily fixed overnight. Restoration will require believers to intentionally practice love, patience, and grace. These are all qualities we are familiar with because we have all experienced them ourselves.

TERRELL CARTER

CONNECTING WITH URBAN YOUTH



Ethics Daily, July 30, 2013

It seems like the list of groups for the Church to consider supporting in the 21st Century continues to grow. We are regularly reminded that we have a responsibility to care for widows and orphans, for the earth and the environment, for local and foreign missionaries, for those who still suffer through the plight of slavery and sexual trafficking, and even our four legged companions.

In light of the circumstances surrounding the George Zimmerman and Trayvon Martin tragedy, I want to suggest that there is one more group the church has an obligation to actively care for and nurture. That group is urban youth.

On a national scale, the Zimmerman/Martin tragedy has reintroduced the discussion of how urban youth, primarily African-American young adults, are perceived in a suspicious light due to the language and slang that they use, their style of dress, and the way they carry themselves in public. Based on these criteria, people make instant, and oftentimes wrong, assessments of the personal and spiritual value of these youth.

This does not only occur in general society. It also happens within the church. Urban youth are not only turned away from employment and educational opportunities because they don't conform to societal norms. They are also turned away from the church because they do

not always conform to traditionally held standards of dress and conduct.

This sentiment is reflected in the lyrics of the song “Church Clothes” written and performed by Lacrae, an urban Christian hip hop artist. “I walk in church with a snapback and they tell me that’s a no-no?” A snapback is a style of baseball hat that is similar to a 70s trucker hat, and is currently popular with urban youth.

Within society, the church, and contemporary Christian culture, urban youth are judged by external criteria that does not take into account their spiritual potential or take into account an ability to be and do more than what is expected of them by society.

In contrast to generally held assumptions about urban youth, there is a spiritual revival of sorts that is occurring in the cities and suburbs of America that is being led by a new hip hop rap generation.

Urban artists and preachers like Lacrae, J’Son, Flame, Thi’sl, and Ken Petty, to name only a few, are leading a new wave of believers who don’t wear khakis or button down shirts, or carry a leather bound Bible. Instead, they wear fitted baseball hats, over-sized t-shirts, Nikes, and read their Bibles on their smart phones.

Most importantly, they love God and the Church with all their hearts. They perform and produce records based on how their life experiences have been changed by having a relationship with Jesus and experiencing the filling of the Holy Spirit, while challenging other people to do the same.

They speak with thick slang, walk with pants that sag, and wear hats that don’t sit completely on their heads... all the while extolling the blessings of spiritual gifts, self-discipline, and the positive experiences of fellowshiping with kindred believers. They memorize scripture, love their families, share their faith on a regular basis, and lead church plants that are reaching an un-churched generation in forgotten cities.

This new generation of men and women are not saints. Many of them come from broken backgrounds including gang violence, run-

ins with law enforcement, and other questionable behavior. Yet they celebrate the redemption that they have received in Christ, just as other people do.

So, what is the church's responsibility to this segment of society that does not fit into a traditional church mold?

First, we have to imitate Christ's practice of welcoming those whom society has attempted to cast away and separate.

Second, remember that when Christ offered salvation to someone, he offered it to them unconditionally. He did not assign prerequisites to the opportunity to be restored to full relationship with God. Instead, he said come just as you are.

Third, we have to recognize and address our own prejudices against people who are different from us.

Fourth, recognize that God is capable of using anyone to proclaim the grace of the gospel.

Finally, listen to them in order to gain an understanding of how they communicate, especially how God has changed them and how they hope to cooperate with God in changing the world.

In doing these things, you may learn that there is more common ground between you and them. As Lacrae says, "We are all products of grace spreading hope to the hopeless."

TERRELL CARTER

*RESPONDING TO THE
OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE HOPE*



TERRELL CARTER

A DAY OF HOPE SERMON



Unpublished Sermon, August 8, 2015

Based on all of the rhetoric we are experiencing from governors, former secretaries of state, congressmen and women, political pundits, talking heads, and billionaires with too much hair, too much money, and too much time on their hands, we are squarely in the throes of the presidential campaign season.

We, as the American people, are squarely in the sites of people who fancy themselves as overqualified to lead the free world. And if you don't believe that, they will happily tell you all the reasons why they are.

One of the things many people look forward to when a new president is elected is the pending presidential inauguration speech. The speech where the newly minted head of state tells the country and the world the vision and plan they have for the future of the United States.

Some famous, awe inspiring, and generation changing things have been said during inauguration speeches. When faced with rallying people who have experienced war or other traumatic events, multiple presidents have found the appropriate words to ease tensions and unify a broken nation.

During his first inaugural speech, Richard Nixon, whom most people wouldn't confuse with a warrior for social unity, said, "We have

endured a long night of the American spirit. But as our eyes catch the dimness of the first rays of dawn, let us not curse the remaining dark. Let us gather the light.” Whether you voted for “Tricky Dick” or not, you have to admit that those words were appropriate for a nation that was tired of the Vietnam War.

When referring to the World War of his time, Woodrow Wilson said, "We are provincials no longer. The tragic events of the thirty months of vital turmoil through which we have just passed have made us citizens of the world. There can be no turning back."

Theodore Roosevelt said “Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us. We have duties to others and duties to ourselves; and we can shirk neither."

One of the most memorable lines ever delivered by a president came from Franklin D. Roosevelt when he said, "This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

John F. Kennedy delivered words that were just as powerful when he said, "My fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: Ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man." These are inspiring words from inspiring people.

Luke 4:14-21 is filled with inspiring words from an inspiring man as well. I would even go so far to say that the words that Jesus the Christ spoke in this text can be seen as the inaugural speech for his burgeoning ministry.

And in these words found in Luke, in this inaugural speech, we are provided with a vision, with a plan for the future, not just for those people in ancient times, but for the times we currently find ourselves in. We are provided with a plan that can unite divided communities and remind us of the common foundation that we all have.

Jesus had recently been baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist. After this baptism experience, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as a sign and affirmation that he was God's son and that God was with him. This was an affirmation that he was the fulfillment of prophecies that had been given generations before.

After being baptized, Jesus spent forty days fasting in the wilderness, eventually experiencing severe temptations to take his eyes off God and the purpose...the plan God had for his life.

He was tempted to trust in his own abilities or the things he could do on his own, to trust in the ability of others or what other people could do for him, and to trust in another power other than God. Ultimately, the temptations were a ploy to get him to lose focus on what he was in the world to do.

After experiencing baptism and confirmation as to his position and purpose, and then experiencing wilderness temptations, Jesus emerges and gets busy doing the work of fulfilling his purpose. We are told that he returns to the area where he was raised and begins to teach others about whom he was and what he was there to do.

Jesus returned home and told anyone who would listen that he had a calling, that God had a plan for the world which revolved around him, and that his purpose for living was to change the world. How do you think that message went over with the people who remembered him from when he was a child?

I can imagine conversations like, "Boy, you're a knucklehead. You were a knucklehead then and you're a knucklehead now. I remember when you were waist high to a grasshopper. You can't tell me about nothing."

If this was happening in St. Louis in 2015, I can imagine people saying, "Boy, be quiet. You're Joseph's son. Go help him with that fledgling carpentry business that he can barely keep open. Or, better

yet, go give your mama some advice. She's the one that got pregnant before she and Joseph were married. And I heard that Joseph may not be your daddy. I'm just saying."

Or, "Boy, you grew up in North St. Louis in the Ville, or in Penrose, or in Walnut Park. Nothing good ever comes from there. Your schools are horrible. Politicians are corrupt. All the people living there are leeching off the government. How about you go and find a regular full-time job and stop trying to live off other people."

Jesus faced the challenge of speaking to people who knew him, or thought they knew him. People, who thought they could categorize him based on who his mother and father were, or the neighborhood that he grew up in, or the job that he had.

Jesus also faced the challenge of speaking as a prophetic change agent during times of political and social tension and unrest which were ripe for military conflicts that could pop off in a matter of moments. He spoke during times when the average Jewish citizen could be stopped and harassed by a Roman soldier for simply existing and then be forced to do that soldiers bidding out of fear of punishment.

Does any of this sound familiar?

Jesus' ministry began during a time when his people were desperately looking for and hoping for a savior that would come and free them from the military and social tensions they were experiencing. Jesus' people were looking for the one that had been prophesied about and had been promised to appear and save them from their enemies.

And so, one day, while Jesus was at the synagogue, someone hands him a scroll and he reads a section from the prophet Isaiah. He reads the passage that says, "God's Spirit is on me; he's chosen me to preach the Message of good news to the poor, sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the burdened and battered free, to announce, "This is God's year to act!" After rolling up the scroll he says, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled. This scripture has come true."

I have to acknowledge that the words that Jesus read from Isaiah are not found in one neat section. What Jesus states in Luke is a compilation of two separate chapters. His words are a meshing of Isaiah 58:1-12 and Isaiah 61:1-2.

Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet who spoke to God's children during a time when they just weren't living right. God sent Isaiah to speak to them in order for them to turn from their wicked ways and do things the way God wanted.

You may be asking yourself what made them so wicked? God's primary complaint against them was similar to the temptations that Jesus faced and overcame. God's complaint was that they trusted self, other people, and systems more than they trusted God.

A second complaint God had against them was they didn't treat other people justly. One of the words used over and over in the book of Isaiah is the word justice. Justice. To act justly. To treat someone fairly. Umm, "Terrell, you do realize that justice is a loaded word don't you? Your definition of justice may not be the same as mine."

In truth, I think what matters most is God's definition of justice...not what a political party thinks or paid advocates think. And, I understand God's justice to mean treating people the way God wants them treated.

So, because God's people wouldn't trust God fully or treat other people justly or fairly, God allowed them to experience a season of military captivity.

Isaiah 58, which Jesus quotes, is attributed to a time when God is trying to prepare the people for impending freedom from captivity. Isaiah tells the people, who are still in captivity, they still weren't where God wanted them to be in a spiritual or communal sense.

Isaiah 58:1-12 says, "Shout! A full-throated shout! Hold nothing back—a trumpet-blast shout! Tell my people what's wrong with their lives, face my family Jacob with their sins! They're busy, busy, busy

at worship, and love studying all about me. To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people—law-abiding, God-honoring. They ask me, 'What's the right thing to do?' and love having me on their side. But they also complain, 'Why do we fast and you don't look our way? Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?' "Well, here's why: The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit. You drive your employees much too hard. You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight. You fast, but you swing a mean fist. The kind of fasting you do won't get your prayers off the ground. Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after: a day to show off humility? To put on a pious long face and parade around solemnly in black? Do you call *that* fasting, a fast day that I, GOD, would like? "This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I'm interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once. Your righteousness will pave your way. The GOD of glory will secure your passage. Then when you pray, GOD will answer. You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'"

The Terrell Carter translation says, "Don't get it twisted folks. I'm less concerned about the actions you perform in a secure religious building or in a comfortable context. I'm most concerned with the actions you perform and attitudes you have towards your fellow man and woman. Do you help them in their times of need? Do you protect them when they are vulnerable? If I can depend on you to do these things for them, you can depend on me during your time of need, as well."

Not only does Jesus quote from Isaiah 58. He also quotes a portion of Isaiah 61:1-2. It says, "The Spirit of GOD, the Master, is on me because GOD anointed me. He sent me to preach good news to the poor, heal the heartbroken, announce freedom to all captives, pardon all prisoners. GOD sent me to announce the year of his grace—a celebration of God's destruction of our enemies—and to comfort all who mourn."

The Terrell Carter translation would say that God's voice of judgement has turned to a voice proclaiming freedom to those who had been held as captives. God's voice speaks, anticipating that once the hearers have turned from their not so righteous ways and start heading in the right direction, God extends blessings of freedom towards them. They no longer will be a people of sorrow and constant grief.

There's an interesting phrase that caught my attention in Is. 61. The phrase says, "To announce the year of his God's grace." In Luke 4, Jesus says, "This is God's year to act." Other translations say, "This is the acceptable year." The CEV says, "This is the year when the LORD God will show kindness to us and punish our enemies."

It is believed that what Isaiah and Christ were referring to was what was called the Jubilee Year. This was a time that would have occurred approximately every 50 years in Jewish culture. During this Jubilee period, the land was not to be worked. Instead, it would be given a time to rest. Debts were forgiven and slaves were freed from bondage.

Property that was gained because a person defaulted on a loan or promise was returned to its family of origin. The point of all of this was to set the people and the land free, starting over fresh. Jubilee Year gives families a clean slate so they would be able to take care of themselves.

Imagine the reaction of not only the hearers in Isaiah's time, but the reaction of those who heard Christ repeat these words in the meeting place. Both groups were people who had experienced political, racial, and social oppression.

Both groups had lost so much to a force that was bigger and stronger than them. Both groups were looking forward to a day when God would free them and restore them to a place of prominence within society. They were praying that restoration would happen sooner than later.

And so, this is the basis of Christ's inaugural message in the meeting place. This is the foundation of Jesus' public ministry. This is the platform for the Kingdom of God Jesus believes he is to institute, a platform of forgiveness, and healing, and restoration.

Good things can emerge from bad events. Some of history's greatest leaders have come to prominence as they have attempted to help people make it through tragic times. Some of our world's greatest humanitarian movements have begun in response to deplorable acts. Now is such a time.

The Brown family and the Wilson family didn't need for their worlds to be changed on Aug 9, 2014, but they were. The City of Ferguson didn't need to become one of the examples of racial and social bias in the United States, but it did. The many men and women who have lost lives, and property, and hope throughout history didn't need to experience those things, but they did.

Today, we don't have to do anything in response to all of this, but we should. Jesus the Christ, didn't have to come to this world in order to inaugurate a new kingdom, a new way of thinking, and a new way of living, but he did. And he is the example many of us claim to follow.

A year later, we have the opportunity to inaugurate a new season in the life of the St. Louis metropolitan region and other regions. We need a new season where we follow the example that Jesus gave us.

We need a season where we speak and live prophetically and share good news with those who need to hear it. Forgiveness and reconciliation for those who were once enemies but now can be partners who work together to heal our divided region is good news.

We can deliver good news of restoration for communities who have experienced pain and anguish. Through our efforts we can provide them with needed resources and

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

opportunities that will make them whole again. We can create good news through acts of living in community with each other where we respect and protect each other as God would have us.

You may be thinking this all sounds kind of trite and unrealistic. For all who feel that way, I understand where you're coming from, but I didn't say things would be perfect. But I believe things can be better than they are right now. Things will be better when we apply Christ's universal principles to our everyday lives.

When we see and treat each other as equals, hold ourselves to the standard that we hold others, and live like we understand that we can't change the world by our efforts only, then healing will occur, restoration will occur, and God's kingdom will be inaugurated before our eyes.

TERRELL CARTER

*RESPONDING TO COMMUNITIES IN NEED
OF RECONCILIATION*



TERRELL CARTER

THE CURRENCY OF GOD'S KINGDOM



Baptist News Global, July 11, 2013

In the past, I have volunteered as a coach for various YMCA youth sports teams. The last team I coached was a K-1st grade soccer team. In the YMCA league, they don't officially count goals, so no one really wins or loses. But it never failed that once the games were over, the first question from all of the kids was "did we win, coach?" We had one little boy who after our team only scored 1 goal, and the other team scored 10 goals, ran to the sideline and told his parents "we won!"

When we are young, being first and getting our way is usually what's most important in life, isn't it? When we are young, we all probably want to be the fastest, or the strongest, or the one that can throw the ball the farthest, or make the most baskets. When we are young, we want to win and be the best at everything.

Unfortunately, this desire to regularly win doesn't necessarily end when we become adults, does it? As adults, we want the biggest car, or the biggest house, or the biggest television, or the brightest shirt, or the biggest corner office. Many people think that they have finally made it in life when they have the most toys that other people envy, or the most followers on Facebook or Twitter.

Someone once said that in God's economy, the rich, those that God says are truly victorious, are not those who have the most toys or the

best office. In God's economy, the person that is to be respected is not the greedy, selfish person. In God's eyes, the opposite type of person is more appealing. In God's economy, "things" are not the priority. Instead, it is love.

The currency of God's Kingdom is love, and as part of our living in God's Kingdom, we should give love away like we have won the Powerball Lottery. I believe that this is one of the ideas relayed in I John 5:1-5. The act of loving is a symbol of wealth, in and of itself.

Love. God is....love. God loved me. God loved you. God loves us. God loved us enough to send the Son on our behalf. Jesus loved us enough that he willingly came and died for us. And, because God loved us, we should love others. It almost seems like John thinks we should just have one big love fest, doesn't it?

Jesus confirms this idea and even clarifies it when he is asked what the greatest commandment is. He says that all of the commandments, rules, and laws of God can be boiled down to two simple sentences, totaling 4 words. "Love God. Love others." What a simple equation.

And according to John, these two things, loving God and loving others, are not hard to do. They are not burdensome. When John uses that word burdensome, he's saying that it's not a hassle to love. God's desire is not an unreasonable request.

How is it possible for us to love? First, through God's own actions, God gave us the greatest example of how to love. God loves so much that God gives. I John is littered with references to this idea of God giving out of love. Second, since we are the children of God, we have been given power by God to overcome (to defeat or conquer) the world. Third, as God's children, the Holy Spirit is our guide and power source. By depending on the Holy Spirit, and seeking the Spirit's guidance in our daily lives, we do not have to be subject to what Satan and the world throws our way in an attempt to keep us from loving God and others.

John Piper says that these things can be, “summed up as desires for what we don’t have and pride in what we do have. When we don’t have what we want, the world corrupts us with covetousness. And when we do have what we want the world corrupts us with pride. This is what keeps us from loving God and loving each other.”

We love stuff. And when we don’t have it, we crave it. And when we do have it, we love to talk about it incessantly. And where is God in all that? At best, he’s there as the cosmic Sugar Daddy. We may even thank him for all our stuff. But there is a kind of gratitude that shows the gift, and not the giver, is our god.”

You may be thinking that this sounds too simple and naïve. How can anyone be expected to realistically buy into this? All I can say is practice love, when you feel like it, and when you don’t. Practice love when it’s convenient, and when it’s not. Practice love when it’s towards people that you know and already care about, or people that you can’t stand. Practice love when it’s towards people you trust, and people you don’t even know.

But please understand that God will not force or coerce any of us into doing anything. You don’t have to do any of these things. But, never forget that you are where you are in life because of the love that has been given for you. Your mother’s love, your father’s love, the love of friends, and even the love of complete strangers.

I think we sometimes forget that we don’t live on an isolated island like the Tom Hanks character in the movie *Cast Away*. We are not by ourselves. We are all connected. We all live in community. We all have the privilege of experiencing God’s love through others. The fact that we are also able to share this love with others is precious.

Dr. Michael Hardin wrote, “We are to love as Jesus loved. We are to love the brothers and sisters. We are to love God. To share in the divine life and so to be called a child of God. In this sphere of love, there is no room for hatred, retaliation, or apathy. Love is the mode of existence of both God and God’s children. To live in this love is to overcome the world that is grounded in the violence and rampage, of retaliation and vengeance. It is to live honoring life and

relationships. It is this way of being, and only this way of being that can be called 'born again.' Any other way of existence is a false and unformed faith."

May we all live out a faith that is being fully formed.

*THREE IDEAS TO KEEP YOUR ONLINE
DISCUSSIONS CIVIL*



Ethics Daily, October 14, 2015

With the headline grabbing political, racial, and social events occurring in the U.S. over the past few months, people have had a lot to talk about.

From videos of brutality committed by both police and citizens, to the expanded attention towards domestic violence prompted by the misconduct of NFL players, to the rise of new terrorist groups like ISIS, to the spread of Ebola from another country to the United States, all forms of media are buzzing with commentary on these and other issues from both informed and uninformed contributors.

In today's vastness of media options, anyone with an opinion on any subject can find a way for their voice to be heard. From Facebook to Twitter to Snapchat to traditional radio call-in shows, there's a medium for every person to have their say.

As diverse as the media platforms available to make opinions heard, there is a diversity of opinions being expressed through that media. One would think that this diversity in opinion would be seen as a good thing.

Unfortunately, this is not how many of us feel.

We all regularly hear and read arguments between people standing on differing sides of an issue that would make the feud between the Hatfields and McCoys look like a kindergarten class tug of war.

Unfortunately, these arguments seem to be less about the issues being discussed and more about the fact that someone does not see the world the same way as I do.

The fallout from these types of arguments can be dramatic. We all have read posts from friends promising to never use Facebook again because people have been insensitive towards them.

We have all read comments posted by participants on a website classifying any group other than theirs as less than human. We have all heard about family members who no longer associate with each other because they have offended each other to the point of no return.

As I hear and read these types of interactions on a daily basis, I am left with the question, “who would Jesus unfriend?”

With so many lines being drawn in the sand based on race, sexuality, economics, and political stances, is there a way to wade through the unfriendly and unproductive chatter typed and uploaded so frequently?

I have three ideas I believe will help us all navigate the process of expressing our own opinions without making those who disagree with us into unnecessary villains.

First, we have to remember that disagreement is not a sin or an unforgivable offense. We are not all required to think alike or to feel the same way about anything. Varying opinions are valuable. Independent thought is admirable and has led to some of the more important discoveries and advances in the world.

History is replete with examples of people who held well-reasoned

dissenting views being justified for their independent thoughts. We can respect another person's right to hold an opinion just as we want them to respect our right to do the same.

Second, we have to realize that wisdom can come in many ways, even if it does not come in a way that I anticipate. Even though I am a Christian, I personally appreciate, and cherish, the opinions of my friends and family who do not hold to any religious faith.

I intentionally ask for the opinions of people who do not hold to the same positions that I do. I do this because I have learned that wisdom is not only found in my belief system. Wisdom can be found in the experiences of people who worship God or in the experiences of people who do not recognize any god.

I have learned that those who may have differing values from me still care about the same things that are important to me and my family. We have a common foundation as humans.

Third, we must learn to distinguish between the person sharing their opinion and the issue being discussed. The totality of a person, or a group of people, is not found only in what they think about a particular subject or the stance they take on a politically charged issue.

As much as we try, the totality of a person or group cannot be adequately summed up by their opinion on one subject. My hope is that we would all do our due diligence and think through our own opinions before we critique those held by someone else.

If we are able to learn how to communicate more effectively with each other, we may be able to make substantial progress towards living together in peace instead of living separately in fear of each other.

TERRELL CARTER

*RESURRECTING MARTIN LUTHER KING'S
MESSAGE OF LOVE*



Ethics Daily, April 7, 2015

As a child, my role model for what a pastor and leader should be was Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. One of my proudest moments as a 17 year old teenager was, after delivering my first sermon at my home church, an older deacon that I admired said that I reminded him of Dr. King in my delivery and message.

I looked up to Dr. King because he was an adamant defender of people who were typically outcast and downtrodden. He defended the racially marginalized, the economically and socially poor, and those who were under political oppression in his own home country and abroad.

Even when his stance against racism, poverty, and militarization became unpopular in society, Dr. King continued to advocate for political, religious, and social action that would bring racism, poverty, and militarism to an end.

Before Dr. King's death, it seemed like the majority of the world had turned against him. Politicians were tired of his constant attempts to usher equality into the world. His contemporaries were tired of his message of non-violence. Even his closest confidants who walked with him during multiple marches for peace were tired of him.

It was clear that Dr. King's message of "love" was falling on deaf ears.

During a recent presentation discussing the last year of Dr. King's life, the social commentator Tavis Smiley asked the question, "Whatever happened to Dr. King's notion of love within our public discourse?"

What was Dr. King's notion of love and what could it mean to our public discourses?

Dr. King's idea of love was that everyone is worthy of respect simply because they are human. Every life has the same equal and precious value, because life originates from the same source.

Every person we interact with, whether we dislike that person's political stance or dislike their favorite football team or disagree with their choice in religion, is worthy of being treated with dignity because we have all been created equal.

The addition or reinsertion of the idea of love, in this Kingian sense, to our public discourse about the problems our nation continues to experience will inevitably make us all uncomfortable because of what it means for those who use the word "love" and what it means for those who hear the word being used.

Those that use the word, in essence, exhibit a certain amount of audacity in expecting an equal platform for participation in life. Those who hear the word love used face the challenge of not viewing its use as an imposition on their own ability to live their lives to the fullest extent possible.

What does all of this mean for the concerns that our nation and communities are currently facing? We live in a wonderful nation, but the problems that continue to plague us (racism, classism, and political wrangling just to name a few) are never acceptable, reasonable, or beneficial to those who experience those actions, or those who practice them. It's hard for me to imagine that our nation

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

will progress past those practices unless Kingian love begins to play a part in our ongoing dialogues.

Dr. King once said, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

Political parties, corporations, and special interest groups may grow without love. But, our nation, as a whole, will not make meaningful progress without it.

TERRELL CARTER

FACING RACISM HEAD ON



Unpublished Article, June 22, 2015

After listening to multiple responses to the shooting occurring at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church by candidates for president and television commentators, it seems like most of them have an aversion to calling the shooting solely a racist incident.

Instead, they initially referred to it as an attack on the church or simply as the act of a mentally deranged person who lived his life on the fringes of society.

Let's be clear, the shooting at Emanuel AME Church was not an attack on the church. It was an attack on African Americans that occurred in a church. It was the shooter's intent to begin a race war that would rival some of the worst experiences in our nation's history.

Why was there apprehension from so many people to call this what it was? It was a racist act. It was an act that was perpetrated by a person that hated a group of people simply because of the color of their skin and heritage.

Unfortunately, there are those in our society who continually denial that racism is one of the main impediments to the livelihood of our

nation. And if those people do acknowledge racism's affects, it's to imply that those who have been adversely affected by it should get up, dust themselves off and stop complaining about what happened in the past.

We have to collectively acknowledge that the system through which our nation operates is built upon practices which bestow greater value upon people of certain colors and classes.

Making this acknowledgement is not for the sake of having a collective kumbaya moment. We do this so that we begin to work toward changing these things. African American writer James Baldwin once wrote "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." Need a reference here

Through the senseless acts that occur, like the shooting at the Emanuel AME Church, we are once again being forced to face the truth about the divisions still existing within our nation.

We can't hide from the fact that many of our legal structures foster racist and classist practices, whether it's exhibited through law enforcement that disproportionately targets and arrests minorities, or the historic disparities in how minorities are sentenced for a crime versus how whites are sentenced.

Our economic structures continue to foster racism and classism, whether it is through the lending practices of banks where the poor and minorities are still charged higher interest rates on loans because of the neighborhoods that they live in, or the predatory nature of payday loan enterprises, or disinvestment in urban communities.

We are still faced with the social structures that celebrate when black children are treated as 'other' because they tried to swim in a pool within a predominantly white community.

What can we do to help counteract this downward trajectory that our nation continues to be headed in, especially as it relates to race and community?

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

The church must do more than just speak out against racism and classism. We must change the way we feel about these issues ourselves, first. Please allow me to clarify.

Our good deeds don't fool God. God is not pleased when we do something for someone with the hopes of building credit with God. For example, God is not impressed when we open our doors to feed people through a food pantry on Saturday, but then cringe when those same people attempt to enter our doors any other day of the week in order to begin a relationship with us.

When we harbor feelings of distrust, disgust, or disdain for those that don't look like us or don't have similar life experiences to us, our actions towards them are not coming from a place of love but a place of discrimination. This is displeasing to our Creator.

The status of our hearts provides the foundation for our actions. Based on the words and actions that we convey, it is clear that our foundation may be set upon sinking sand.

TERRELL CARTER

*DO YOU LEGISLATE YOUR
BELIEFS OR LIVE THEM?*



Ethics Daily, July 1, 2015

There are multiple hot button issues that the Supreme Court will make rulings on in the very near future.

My intent here is not to address any of those rulings in this column. What I want to address is one of the dominant attitudes that seems to be regularly espoused by Christians when discussing any subject that involves beliefs that call into question our understanding of what is right and wrong.

The attitude I am referring to is that of separation; where if someone doesn't believe what we believe or feel about a particular subject, we can't associate with them.

Although political involvement has been the hallmark of the church throughout history, in its current incarnation, it almost seems like the newest goal of Christian political involvement is to make sure that the only rights which are considered legitimate are the ones conforming to the Christian worldview.

I have to ask myself, was it God's goal for Christians to legislate their faith on others or was it God's hope that Christians would model a consistent loving relationship with others built on the example of Christ so that people would be encouraged to enter this type of

relationship with their Creator?

Please understand that I am not saying that Christians should give up their rights or beliefs to make someone else comfortable.

What I am saying is that Christians can't force their system of belief on people who don't see the benefits of participating in that system.

One of the most prolific writers of the 20th Century was James Baldwin who said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

Mr. Baldwin used his writings to bring about positive change in how people of differing ethnicities viewed each other and how those who lived sexually alternative lifestyles were viewed. He did this from the vantage point of being a gay black man.

Mr. Baldwin grew up in the church, even becoming a minister while still in his teens. But after experiencing regular beatings at the hands of his step-father who used scripture to justify his wrath, and watching his mother and siblings experience physical abuse, James' attitude towards God changed. He no longer saw God as loving and caring. He only saw God as vengeful, hurtful, and full of wrath.

Through his writings, he was able to be honest about the pain he experienced at the hands of people who claimed God as their focus.

He was able to be honest about the differences in what he was taught about faith in God and how people did or didn't live out those faith principles in their own lives, and about how churches could be places of pain and separation instead of healing and reconciliation.

Through his writings, he also chronicled his struggles answering the question of why anyone would want to experience our Christian faith if we don't exhibit the traits of grace and love within our own lives.

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

What can be done to change the reputation the church is rapidly acquiring? This reputation says we aren't exhibiting the characteristics of the one we claim to follow.

Simply put, we have to be honest about our practices and the affect they have on our witness for God. We have to be honest about our fears of losing influence and becoming irrelevant as it relates to our place in this culture. We have to be honest about our prejudices towards people who don't see things exactly like we do and who understand God's desires differently than we do. Finally, we have to be honest about how all of this affects how people see and understand God.

Being honest can help us identify where we need to change and become better witnesses to the grace and love we claim. This would be a much more effective witness for our Savior.

TERRELL CARTER

GOING TO THE ZOO WHILE BLACK



St. Louis American, June 13, 2016

A first-grader from Wichita, KS was mauled by a leopard after the boy scaled a 4-foot railing surrounding the leopard exhibit, crossed an 8-foot gap and approached the animal's cage. The child received lacerations to his head and neck after the leopard stuck its paw through the cage and grabbed the boy by the side of the head.

A 2-year-old boy lunged from his mother's grasp and fell over a 10-foot wooden railing into an enclosed wild African dog exhibit where he was mauled to death. The child's family subsequently settled out of court with the zoo for an undisclosed sum.

A 3-year old boy, while at Arkansas's Little Rock Zoo with his father and grandfather, slipped through the railings surrounding a jaguar exhibition and sustained multiple injuries after he fell 15-feet into the cat pit. The family's request to keep the child's name private were granted by the hospital, zoo and multiple media outlets.

A 2-year-old boy, while at a Cleveland zoo, suffered injuries to his legs after he experienced a 10-foot fall into a cheetah exhibit after his mother dangled him over the exhibit's railing.

Outside of the fact that these incidents occurred at zoos, the common factor that these incidents hold is that neither the race of

the child nor the race or criminal history of their parents was ever a point of emphasis by media outlets or the press.

The father of the boy that recently fell into the Cincinnati Zoo gorilla exhibit inhabited by Harambe didn't fare so well. Within days of Harambe's death, the father's personal history and information was being shared by media outlets on the internet. One of the ironies of this was that the father wasn't at the zoo when his son tumbled into the enclosure.

After finding out that the child and his parents were black, multiple outlets began to point to their race as a contributing factor for why the boy ended up in the predicament. In addition to their race, multiple pundits commented on the physical weight of the parents and the number of children in their family as additional contributing factors that contributed to the incident.

This leads me to wonder why black people and other minorities don't receive the benefit of the doubt when high profile incidents like this occur while white people who experience similar situations are generally given the benefit of the doubt.

An incident that occurred in St. Louis, MO serves as another example of this trend. A white infant died from heat exposure after her parents forgot that she was in the backseat of the family vehicle. The parents were not charged with a crime related to her death. Instead, the public was encouraged to show that family sympathy.

Less than a week later, a black mother was arrested after she left her adolescent children in an air conditioned car while she ran into a store to grab a few items. This woman was summarily vilified in the media.

There is a disparity in how we present certain people groups as worthy of mercy and understanding while simultaneously holding other people groups to a different standard. How can we who seek justice and equality for all help to change this uneven practice?

First, when someone's ethnicity is identified in a story, we can ask

ourselves if the inclusion of that information makes a difference in why a situation occurred. This can help determine if the author is writing from a particular racialized slant.

Second, we can call out writers and media outlets that make ethnicity a criteria in who to hold accountable and who not to hold accountable.

Third, we can remember for every incident that occurs within one particular people group, a similar situation has likely already occurred through every other people group. If it hasn't happened, it likely will in the near future.

Fourth, we all can engage in honest dialogue with people of ethnicities that differ from ours so that we can learn how they are unique from us yet similar to us in so many ways.

TERRELL CARTER

*GRACE DOESN'T REQUIRE
ADDITIONAL RULES*



Ethics Daily, June 27, 2016

"Sesame Street" was one of my favorite television shows as a child.

The segment on the show that I most looked forward to seeing regularly was the one where characters would figure out what object in a group of four things didn't belong.

The lyrics for the song in this segment were: "Three of these things belong together. Three of these things are kind of the same. Can you guess which one of these doesn't belong here? Now it's time to play our game."

The purpose of the song and segment was to help children get into the habit of understanding and identifying what made something in a group different from the other things in that group - whether it was different because of its shape, color, material or its intended use.

Although I believe that learning how to identify what makes something similar or different is a valuable skill we are all able to use in life, I think that it is a skill that can be misused even in the church.

For the past several weeks, verses from Paul's letter to the Galatians have been part of the lectionary readings. One of Paul's goals in

writing this letter was to deal with the question of whether Gentiles, or non-Jews, with all of their uniqueness should be counted as equal members in the family of God.

Some people in the early church believed that the only way for Gentiles to be acceptable to God, even after expressing faith in Jesus as Messiah, was if they also followed all the same rules as those who adhered to Judaism. For this group, rule following was as important as following Christ.

Paul disagrees with this sentiment and throughout the letter makes the case that because of the grace that was extended to everyone through Christ's sacrifice, following a set of rules no longer made people acceptable to God.

Although this idea of someone being left out of God's family based on a person's race or whether they kept certain dietary or ceremonial practices might be a foreign concept to most of us in the 21st century, there are other things that have become the gold standard for determining whether someone is worthy of God's love.

I find a great deal of irony when people point to the law as the standard for how we are to live our lives today because these same laws were used to justify slavery and to keep generations of minorities in subjugation and servitude. It seems as if some people prefer to continue this practice over other people groups.

My comments are not an attack on the law. I am not against it. I see great value in it because it comes from God. But the law was not God's final words of wisdom to humankind.

Paul says, "In fact, the Law was our teacher. It was supposed to teach us until we had faith and were acceptable to God. But once a person has learned to have faith, there is no more need to have the Law as a teacher. All of you are God's children because of your faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:24-26).

Paul concludes his thoughts by saying that through God's grace, there isn't a hierarchal status in God's family based on whether you are Jew

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

or Greek, slave or free, man or woman. We are all equal in God's sight.

Although I'm not against the law or tradition, I'm concerned about our human tendencies to use it to justify violence, separation and discrimination against people who are different from us.

I'm concerned about our practice of using law as a way to determine who is worthy of God's love and who can be cast aside.

I'm concerned about our comfort in using the law as a way to keep things from changing and losing our personal power and influence.

I believe that Paul was also concerned about this. I find comfort in knowing that I'm in good company.

TERRELL CARTER

*RESPONDING TO THE
OPPORTUNITY TO DO BETTER*



TERRELL CARTER

A BETTER AMERICA?



www.terrellcarter.net, June 30, 2016

Donald Trump wants to make America a great nation again.

This mantra has been the cornerstone of his campaign to become president of the United States. But what are some of his ideas for making America great again? So far he's suggested profiling all Muslims, building a wall between the United States and Mexico in order to keep out illegal immigrants and making Mexico pay for its construction.

I wonder what else Mr. Trump believes needs to occur in order to return America to its former glory? Who else would need to be profiled? What other people group needs to be penalized as a whole for the sins committed by one person in that group? As the political season forges on, we are guaranteed to find out.

Since the beginning of his campaign, many people have pointed out the multiple problems with his overall philosophy and how his ideas, if implemented, would actually make America less secure and less great.

Other people have suggested that Trump's views don't represent the heartbeat of our nation. Now that he has secured the nomination to

become the Republican candidate for president, it's clear that his message of separation and isolation is actually shared by multiple people.

Other politicians are expanding on Trump's message of making America a great nation again. Rick Tyler, an Independent candidate running to represent Tennessee's 3rd Congressional District in the House of Representatives says the way to make America great again is to "make America white again."

Although many people have already spoken out against Tyler's statements, as with Trump, there's still a portion of our nation that agrees with him, as well.

When I hear Mr. Trump's and Mr. Tyler's rhetoric, or read of campaign ads to make America white again, I am eerily reminded of calls to make America a Christian nation again. Every year, multiple politicians make this idea of returning our nation to its former religious glory part of their platforms.

On a personal note, I don't think that people who desire to see this happen are evil. I don't think that people who hope to have their particular faith tradition recognized and remembered as an integral part of our national history are necessarily wrong.

As a Christian and a pastor I wholeheartedly believe in God, Christ, the Church and the positive changes that Christian faith has made within our nation's history.

But, I wonder what returning America to a strictly Christian nation would look like and what type of Christianity we would follow.

Would it be the kind that justified slavery by citing Old Testament scripture? Would it be the kind that agreed with keeping women silent in all areas of life based on one or two debatable sections of scripture delivered by Paul while ignoring the other passages where he clearly recognizes and affirms women as his equals in ministry? Would it be the type of Christianity that justified wiping out other nations because they wouldn't convert to our system of beliefs?

I make these comments realizing that other faith traditions can be accused of these same things, but I can't think of any recent campaigns to make America a Muslim, Hindu, or Zoroastrian nation.

As I listen to the speeches being delivered on campaign trails, I am left with a few questions. Are we called by God to make America into one homogenous land where everyone agrees with one particular party or line of religious thinking? Or are we called to recognize God's image as reflected through the diversity of people and opinions that we experience, even when that diversity isn't always congruent?

I hold out hope for the latter because a nation like the one being touted by Mr. Trump doesn't sound like a place where sinners, tax collectors, grumpy fishermen, or carpenters who think they can change the world for good would be welcomed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

When Doing Wrong is Right (Unpublished sermon)

Utley, Bob. New Testament Studies: Commentary on Luke 13. 2012.

http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/new_testament_studies/VOL03A/VOL03A_13.html

Weir, Todd. Blooming Cactus: Following the Unwritten Rules. August 16, 2010.

<http://bloomingcactus.typepad.com/bloomingcactus/2010/08/luke-131017-following-the-unwritten-rules.html>

The Currency of God's Kingdom

Hardin, Michael. Preaching Peace: VI Easter, Year B Commentary. 2013.

<http://www.preachingpeace.org/lectionaries/35-year-b/202-yearb-easter6.html>

Piper, John. Regeneration, Faith, Love: In that Order. March 2, 2008.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/regeneration-faith-love-in-that-order>

Resurrecting Martin Luther King's Message of Love

Baldwin, James. As Much Truth As One Can Bear: To Speak Out about the World as It Is, Says James Baldwin, Is the Writer's Job as Much of the Truth as One Can Bear. The New York Times Book Review, Page BR11. January 14, 1962.

King, Martin Luther. Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story. Ballantine Books. 1958.

Who Is Worthy of Our Compassion?

Hoezee, Scott. Center for Excellence in Preaching: The Lectionary Gospel, Luke 10:25-37. July 3, 2016.

<http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-10c/>

Prior, Andrew. Dancing Like a Samaritan. July 10, 2016.

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE

<http://onemansweb.org/https://:@onemansweb.org/theology/the-year-of-luke-2016/dancing-like-a-samaritan-luke-1025-37.html>

Thomas, Debie. Journey With Jesus: Go and Do Likewise. July 3, 2016.
<http://www.journeywithjesus.net/essays/1023-go-and-do-likewise>

*WHO IS WORTHY OF
OUR COMPASSION?*



Pinnacle Leadership Associates, July 12, 2016

Although there are many lines that divide our country today, the most visible and contentious one is the line of race, in particular how black and white people perceive and act towards each other.

The reality of tension between people groups isn't unique to our time. Racial and social tensions have been present throughout centuries past. This issue served as the foundation for Jesus' parable "The Good Samaritan," one of Sunday's Lectionary readings (July 10, 2016).

There was considerable hostility between the not so distantly related Jews and Samaritans. In the article "Dancing Like a Samaritan", Rev. Andrew Prior describes Samaritans as a "source for moral infuriation" for any good Jew.

In Luke 9, Jesus sent a group to a Samaritan village to let them know that he would be traveling through on his way to Jerusalem, but the Samaritan inhabitants refused to accommodate Jesus and his

followers. James and John became enraged and asked Jesus about calling down fire from heaven to destroy that village.

With this incident in their recent memory, Jesus makes someone who represents the people group that had just spurned him and his followers the example of grace and mercy that the disciples were to imitate.

As you think about the parable, put yourself in the shoes of its characters.

How would you feel if you were the unnamed victim in the parable? What would you need in his situation? You would need someone to come along and help you. You wouldn't care if your biggest enemy from high school. All you would care about is if that person was willing to help you.

A Jewish priest walks by...a person who was part of your "tribe"...a person who could relate to you. But, the priest doesn't stop. Instead, he crosses over to the other side of the road and continues to walk into the distance, leaving you bloody and dying.

Now, imagine that you're the priest. You know you're walking on a dangerous road. People are attacked and killed there on a regular basis. The first question in the priest's mind is probably, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me? Is this a trap? Is this a set up? Are the people that did this to him still hiding, waiting to jump out and attack me too?" He may have also been thinking that if the man is dead already, what sense is there in stopping? He couldn't bring him back to life. He'll advise the powers that be of what he saw on the road.

Self-preservation and inconvenience are likely on the priest's mind. But, I may be giving the priest the benefit of the doubt. He may not have helped the man simply because he was preoccupied with other things. Things like his family, or his job, or if he's like me, he was anxious to get to his tee time.

He may not have wanted to be inconvenienced with the problems of

someone else whom he didn't know. For all the priest knew, this man may have gotten what he deserved. Everyone knew that particular road was dangerous and the priest may have thought that the man should have done something different in order to not put himself in that predicament.

As the events unfolded last week, did any of us think that? Did any of us think that if those two black men that were shot by police would have done things differently they would still be alive today? If they would have just done what they were told, multiple police officers wouldn't have been shot in Dallas.

As the parable concludes, a Samaritan appears on the scene; a person whose village would still be burning from holy fire if it were up to James and John. The Samaritan is the only person to put self-preservation and personal convenience aside.

The relevance, the importance of a Samaritan doing this for a Jew is like a Hatfield helping an injured McCoy...or a Union soldier helping a Confederate soldier who had been injured on the battlefield...or a Cardinal's fan helping a Cubs fan who was injured at Busch Stadium.

The Samaritan had every reason not to help the injured man. The Samaritan could have gloated at this man's situation and thought to himself, "Well, that's what he gets. He's not like me. He's 'other.' He thinks and believes differently than me. He thinks he's better than me. Let him die. It won't affect my life. That's what all people like him should experience."

Instead, he had compassion. Jesus says that he was "was moved with pity." The Samaritan saw the man's need and had to do something to help him.

Dr. Debie Thomas writes, "What Jesus did when he deemed the Samaritan 'good' was radical and risky; it stunned his Jewish listeners. He was asking them to dream of a different kind of kingdom. He was inviting them to consider the possibility that a person might add up to more than the sum of (his/her) political, racial, cultural, and economic identities."

In light of what occurred last week, and the multiple responses that we have heard from various talking heads, I wonder who is worthy of our compassion? What will you do when someone who is wholly different from you comes to you in need of empathy?

What happens when someone who is on the opposite end of what we consider acceptable wants to be welcomed by you? Will you be willing to accept them or will they have to be the “right” kind of person?

This conversation is much bigger than what goes on inside the four walls of our churches. This plays out in daily life through how we view and interact with people who aren’t acceptable because they are different from us.

Ultimately, the question we have to answer is whether we are willing to be compassionate to anyone, regardless of external factors? Are we willing to, as Dr. Scott Hoezee says, “Feel a genuine distress over another person’s suffering accompanied by a firm desire to relieve that suffering (and then to actually relieve it if possible).”

This is the question that we all have to answer following the incidents of last week.

TERRELL CARTER

BIBLIOGRAPHY



When Doing Wrong is Right (Unpublished sermon)

Utley, Bob. New Testament Studies: Commentary on Luke 13. 2012.

http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/new_testament_studies/VOL03A/VOL03A_13.html

Weir, Todd. Blooming Cactus: Following the Unwritten Rules. August 16, 2010.

<http://bloomingcactus.typepad.com/bloomingcactus/2010/08/luke-131017-following-the-unwritten-rules.html>

The Currency of God's Kingdom

Hardin, Michael. Preaching Peace: VI Easter, Year B Commentary. 2013.

<http://www.preachingpeace.org/lectionaries/35-year-b/202-yearb-easter6.html>

Piper, John. Regeneration, Faith, Love: In that Order. March 2, 2008.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/regeneration-faith-love-in-that-order>

Resurrecting Martin Luther King's Message of Love

Baldwin, James. As Much Truth As One Can Bear: To Speak Out about the World as It Is, Says James Baldwin, Is the Writer's Job as Much of the Truth as One Can Bear. The New York Times Book Review, Page BR11. January 14, 1962.

King, Martin Luther. Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story. Ballantine Books. 1958.

Who Is Worthy of Our Compassion?

Hoezee, Scott. Center for Excellence in Preaching: The Lectionary Gospel, Luke 10:25-37. July 3, 2016.

<http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-10c/>

Prior, Andrew. Dancing Like a Samaritan. July 10, 2016.

<http://onemansweb.org/https://:@onemansweb.org/theology/the-year-of-luke-2016/dancing-like-a-samaritan-luke-1025-37.html>

Thomas, Debie. Journey With Jesus: Go and Do Likewise. July 3, 2016.

<http://www.journeywithjesus.net/essays/1023-go-and-do-likewise>

LEADERSHIP IN BLACK AND WHITE