

DEALING WITH RACISM FROM A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE: HOW SHOULD THE PASTOR/PREACHER RESPOND TO POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CRISES

AGENDA

OPENING

WHY ARE WE HERE?

- Ensure NVBA has a common understanding
- Identify our opportunities for increased knowledge
- Determine what the participants want to accomplish in deciding what role pastor/preachers should play in dealing with evidence of racism.
- Establish the methodology to be applied in the workshop – open discussion – small group discussion, etc.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

- Establish what answers the group is seeking
- Determine what standards will be applied to the results achieved
- Determine how to ensure the message reaches pastors, congregations, and community.
- Decide how to summarize the results, evaluate feedbacks, collect feedback
- How to balance concerns of the accuser and accused?

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

- How will the facilitators function?
- Identify roles, timelines, expectations
- Guide the discussion
- What will the participants be expected to do?

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

WHAT ARE THE FACTS AND ASSUMPTIONS/MISINTERPRETATIONS ABOUT RACIST BEHAVIOR AND ITS IMPACT?

- WHAT IS RACISM AND WHAT ARE SIGNS OF RACISM?
 - DICTIONARY DEFINITION
 - SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITION
- WHAT ARE EVENTS/SITUATIONS OFTEN MISINTERPRETED AS RACISM?
- SHOULD WE VIEW RACIST BEHAVIOR AS INDIVIDUAL ACTS BY INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE?
- IS THERE SUCH A THING AS INSTITUTIONAL RACISM – IF SO HOW DOES IT LOOK IN THE REAL WORLD?
- CAN PEOPLE BE BORN RACIST?
- CAN BLACKS OR OTHER MINORITIES BE RACIST?
- WHAT IS THE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE?

WHAT IS THE HISTORY CONCERNING THESE TOPICS?

- WHAT DOES HISTORY TELL US ABOUT BLACKFACE?
- HOW TO ADD MIMING WITHIN THE CHURCH WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF BLACKFACE?
 - KNOW THE ORIGINS OF MIMING AND THE MEANING OF THE WHITE FACE MASKS
- WHAT DOES HISTORY TELL US ABOUT MINSTREL SHOWS, ETC.

WHAT SHOULD THE PASTOR/PREACHER DO?

WHAT ARE THE MERITS/DEFICIENCIES OF ZERO TOLERANCE?

- HOW DO WE FRAME THE ISSUE FOR OUR CONGREGATION?
- DO WE BRING THE HAMMER DOWN?
- WHAT IS THE THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE?
- DO WE CALL FOR FULL INVESTIGATION – THEN BRING THE HAMMER DOWN?
- DO WE CONSIDER THE WHOLE PERSON – WARTS AND ALL?

WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE VIABLE IN REACTING TO RACIST BEHAVIORS?

- WHAT VALUE DOES SPECIAL TRAINING HAVE?
- WHAT ROLE SHOULD SPECIAL COUNSELING PLAY?
- WHEN IS REMOVAL/RESIGNATION FROM LEADERSHIP POSITIONS THE RIGHT ANSWER?

WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL STANDARDS FOR RESPONDING TO SUCH BEHAVIORS

- ARE WE QUALIFIED TO JUDGE THOSE WHOSE BEHAVIORS ARE OBJECTIONABLE – MAT 7:1-4; GAL 6
- HOW DOES THE BIBLE TELL US TO DEAL WITH SUCH DISPUTES – MAT 18:15-17
- WHAT ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION?
- HOW DOES FORGIVENESS LOOK? WHAT ARE SIGNS OF FORGIVENESS
- WHERE DOES GRACE FIT?
- HOW ABOUT MERCY?
- WHERE IS JUSTICE?
- HOW TO ESTABLISH A CLEAN SLATE?
- HOW TO PREEMPT SITUATIONS, OR “COME CLEAN” BEFORE THE STORM?

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WHAT DO WE STOP DOING?

WHAT DO WE START DOING?

WHAT DO WE CONTINUE DOING?

BACKGROUND

Racism has reared its ugly head once again in the United States – especially in the realm of politics. We are seeing individuals and activist groups speaking up and acting out in assertive and sometimes controversial ways to protest and counter behaviors by people at all levels of society – behaviors that violate current interpretations of ethical and spiritual principles that have been ignored for decades. No longer do we see individuals and organizations look the other way when racist actions and words are identified.

Recently we have seen politicians admit to past behaviors currently considered to be totally unacceptable – although they were common – but behind the scenes when they did these things. However, we now find ourselves being influenced to punish them today for what they did in the past. The #ME TOO Movement has been a powerful influence – one that has impacted the way pastors/preachers respond to the issues that inappropriate behaviors concerning race generate.

Consequently, we need to address these issues both a practical, substantive, and spiritual viewpoint. In doing so we – who are spiritual leaders need to remind ourselves of our responsibilities to bring balance and reason to the situations that are arising and demonstrate the power of Christian love when confronting the consequences of controversial issues in the world in which we live.

Any discussion of racism should start with clarifying definitions. It is worth noting that much of the disagreement that develops in discussions on racism rises from people applying their own definitions for racism and racist by extension. Therefore, we need to settle on a clearly understood definition before we go any farther in this discussion. For accuracy, we need to recognize that the dictionary definition of racism, based on the etymology (derivation) of this word, may not really reflect a more sophisticated understanding of this term as it related to the behaviors of individuals and groups in world societies. In other words, we must also determine realistic applications of this term as it describes how societal and ethnic groups relate to each other. Using the Merriam Webster dictionary we see the word – racism – defined as follows:

Racism – noun - rac·ism | \ 'rā-, si-zəm also -, shi- \

Definition of racism

1: a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race

2a: a doctrine or political program based on the assumption of racism and designed to execute its principles

b: a political or social system founded on racism

3: racial prejudice or discrimination

However, life does not conform to our dictionary definitions very often. So, we need to examine how racist activities play out in the real world. **Scholars, also commonly define racism not only in terms of individual prejudice, but also in terms of a power structure that protects the interests of the dominant culture and actively discriminates against ethnic minorities. From this perspective, while members of ethnic minorities may be prejudiced against members of the dominant culture, they lack the political and economic power to actively oppress them, and they are therefore not practicing "racism."**

Simply put, a critical aspect of racism – when considered from a sociological perspective – is that it is part of a “power structure” that can be used to oppress or suppress other ethnic groups – particularly minorities. Absent the power to act upon prejudices and/or discriminatory ideas racism cannot exist. Prejudices and discriminatory attitudes remain just that – attitudes not backed by official or unofficial but accepted actions. In other words, although members of minority groups can be prejudiced and have discriminatory attitudes – without the power to act safely upon their attitudes they cannot turn their prejudices into racist behavior.

Maulana Karenga argued that racism constituted the destruction of culture, language, religion, and human possibility and that the effects of racism were "the morally monstrous destruction of human possibility involved redefining African humanity to the world, poisoning past, present and future relations with others who only know us through this stereotyping and thus damaging the truly human relations among peoples".^[63]

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that we have two people facilitate **initial discussion sessions**, as we determine the long term viability of this approach to dealing with these issues. These two people should have had significant experience in teaching, managing programs in this arena and conducting workshops and focus groups on these topics. They are Dr. George W. Farmer, Jr., DMin – Pastor, Olive Branch Baptist Church, Haymarket, VA and Chair, NVBA Commission on Civic and Social Actions; and Dr. Jeffrey Wallace, PhD – Deacon, Olive Branch Baptist Church, Haymarket, VA and retired Associate Vice Provost and Assistant to the President, Akron University, Akron, OH. Their Relevant experiences and credentials are provided below.

Dr. George W. Farmer, Jr.; DMin

Chairperson, Commission on Civic and Social Action, NVBA
Pastor, Olive Branch Baptist Church, Haymarket, VA

EDUCATION

B.S. Zoology, Honors Program, Howard University 1964
MDiv, Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD) 1997
DMin. Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD) 2002

AWARDS (highlights)

Beta Kappa Chi Scientific Honor Society 1963
Dean's List Howard University 1961, 1963
Honors Program Howard University School of Liberal Arts 1960-64
Dean's Special Award – HUSD 1997
Best DMIN Thesis – HUSD 2002
Distinguished Alumni Award – HUSD 2007
101 Distinguished Alumni Award – HUSD 2017

Bronze Star Medal – US Air Force 1967
Commendation Medal – US Air Force 1971
Certificate of Merit (multiple) – CIA 1978-1993
Certificate of Distinction (multiple) - CIA - 1989-1995

Distinguished Intelligence Medal – CIA 1998 (highest non-combat award given by CIA)

Dr. Farmer, after ten years as a regular officer in the U.S. Air Force where he reached the rank of captain, moved to the CIA, working as aerodynamic missile analyst in the Office of Weapons Intelligence in the Directorate of Intelligence. While at CIA, Dr. Farmer had a variety of assignments including staff work supporting Arms Control negotiations (SALT-II treaty) in the late 1970s, later serving as Executive Secretary of the Director of Central Intelligence Committee on Weapons and Space Systems. He also managed Ballistic Missile Analysis covering the world, and later served as the senior CIA representative to the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering.

He returned to the Directorate of Intelligence to serve as Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. **In that position he led the development of the Multicultural Management Program, later expanded and renamed the Diversity Management Program, and served as Director of this program from 1988-1995. He was promoted to the Senior Intelligence Service in 1991 – reaching a grade equivalent to that of a two star general in the military – and served as a voting member of the Directorate of Intelligence Corporate Board, until leaving that the Directorate in 1995 to serve as an executive on loan to Howard University.**

While Director of the Diversity Management Program, Mr. Farmer designed and/or directed the development of over eighteen separate training programs ranging from basic diversity awareness workshops to advanced employee development programs. Among the courses he developed and conducted were those dealing with racial and sexual harassment

– training over 2500 personnel over a two year period. The courses became the model for workshops developed for the entire Agency population. His overall program on managing diversity was often singled out as a model for other government agencies. As a result, he provided counsel on diversity issues to several other Governmental departments including, Defense Intelligence Agency, EPA, Treasury, Defense, and Agriculture.

Dr. Farmer, as the senior internal management Consultant to the Deputy Director for Intelligence, also focused his efforts on grooming and developing minority and female officers for leadership at the highest levels in the Agency, as well as being a special resource to the senior management of the Agency. His work included counseling, coaching, and arranging for effective mentoring for high potential officers. Many of those officers have since ascended to key leadership positions throughout the Agency – including Deputy Directors, Acting Directors, as well as Director of CIA.

Dr. Farmer retired from the CIA in late 1997. After retirement, he served as a senior consultant at the Agency from 1998-2007. **He supported the special Assistant to the DCIA for Diversity, Plans and Programs from 2000-2007, focusing on coaching and advising senior managers across the Agency and developing programs supporting recruitment, retention, and employee development, and effective management of diversity.** In addition, Dr. Farmer provided coaching and consultative services to other government agencies and organizations across the country. **He also served as consultant to the Dean at Howard University School of Divinity, where he had served as an Executive on Loan from 1995-97. In this capacity, he provided insight on leadership issues and strategic planning and special programs from 1997-2006.**

Dr. Farmer became an ordained Baptist Minister in 1990 and has served as Pastor of Olive Branch Baptist Church since 1999. He has achieved numerous honors during the course of his ministry. He was a speaker at the Hampton ministers' Conference in 2006 – participating in their Senior Statesman Panel – and has been a member of the Conference Executive Board since 1999. **Dr. Farmer has done leadership workshops at major churches across the country over the last twenty years as well.** He has been married to Loretta Farmer for over fifty six years and has two adult children and four adult grandchildren.

Dr. Jeffrey Wallace, PhD

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Graduate Degrees:

- Ph.D. Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education
State University of New York at Buffalo, 1980
- M.Ed. Counseling - College Student Personnel
State University of New York at Buffalo, 1973

Undergraduate Degree:

- B.A. History
State University College at Fredonia, NY 1968

PROFESSIONAL and ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

Retired Professor, Department of Associate Studies, Summit College, The University of Akron—June 2011

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT of ASSOCIATE STUDIES, Community and Technical College, The University of Akron, 1995-2011 - Tenure granted in 1998, promotion to Professor granted in 2002

ASSOCIATE PROVOST AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, The University of Akron, July 2001-August 2003

ASSOCIATE PROVOST AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR CAMPUS DIVERSITY, The University of Akron, 1998-2001

ASSOCIATE PROVOST AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS, The University of Akron, 1995-1998

Reported to the Senior Vice President and Provost.

Advised the President and the Senior Vice President and Provost on issues of diversity, multicultural concerns and related issues.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – ASSOCIATE PROVOST AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

As Associate Provost:

- Served as a member of the Council of Deans and spoke to diversity and multicultural issues relevant to students, faculty, and staff.
- Served as an ex-officio member of the President’s Commission on Equity and other such commissions and committees as assigned by the Provost or President.
- Functioned as a line officer in the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost.
 - Consulted with the Senior Vice President and Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs, and developed programs and services to enhance the access, retention, and graduation of diverse student populations.
 - Advised the Senior Vice President and Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate School on academic issues affecting the access, retention, and graduation of diverse student populations.
 - Assisted the Vice President and Chief Information Officer on data collection/analysis regarding campus demographics, assessment of University progress through external benchmarking data and analysis of internal data.
 - Worked with the Senior Vice President and Provost, the college deans, and other University officials to promote and enhance awareness and

appreciation of diversity and multicultural issues in the classroom and workplace.

- Exercised supervisory responsibility and developed an integrated work plan for the Office of Multicultural Development (consisting of the Division of Access and Retention and the Division of Pan African Cultural and Research Center) to ensure appropriate coordination and effectiveness with other campus units.

As Assistant to the President:

- Advised the President on issues of diversity and multicultural development, and as appropriate, worked with senior level University officers to support fundraising to enhance University and privately funded scholarship programs related to diversity.
- Worked with the President and Vice President for Public Affairs and Public Development to promote cultural diversity and cultural enrichment opportunities for the University and the community.
 - Planned and implemented significant university-to-community outreach and programming activities that promoted good will for the University and that supported and enhanced access, retention, and graduation of students.
 - Planned and implemented significant campus programming, developed in consultation with the Director of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs, including lectures and workshops for students and employees.
 - Developed appropriate assessment tools to evaluate the effectiveness of programming/workshops in raising awareness of, and sensitivity to, diversity and multicultural issues.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Co-Investigator, Ohio Science and Engineering Alliance, 5 year grant \$60,000, direct academic support, and \$60,000 student internships.
- Supervision of the Pan African Studies Program, 2000- 2003.
- Established a Minority Student Retention Plan for the University.
- Established the Dr. Shirla R. McClain Gallery of Akron's Black History & Culture.
- Created the Samuel Proctor Memorial Lecture Series.
- Restructured and reorganized the Office of Minority Affairs to the Office of Multicultural Development.
- Developed Campus Diversity and Office of Multicultural Development brochures.
- Developed a Post-Secondary Option Program for Minority Students - (college courses at Buchtel High School).
- Developed a Minority Scholars Program - students with 3.0 or better GPA.
- Developed an experimental research model to retain minority students, PASSAGE (**P**reparing **A**kron **S**tudents for **S**uccess and **G**reat **E**xpectations) – Learning Community Model.

- Organized and planned the President’s Black Advisory Council meetings with Community Leaders.
- Established a computer lab for minority students to provide computer and technological skills.
- Restructured the Extended Orientation Program for first-time, full-time minority freshmen and their parents.
- Established long-term (five year plan) and short-term (one year) goals for the Office of Multicultural Development.
- Organized and directed an Ad Hoc Committee to coordinate admissions, financial assistance, orientation and registration process to improve access and retention of minority students.
- Organized an Admissions/Scholarship Committee to provide timely scholarship awards.
- Created liaison relationships between and among various academic and administrative offices.
- Organized a campus committee to review scholarships and support structures for the BS/MD Program.
- Planned and initiated a series of campus-wide videoconferences on diversity and affirmative action issues.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serves on departmental, college and university committees.
- Serves as an active member of community boards and committees.
- Develops new courses and modify existing courses based on new scholarship and student need.
- Advises and mentors students.

ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Served as Interim Director, Pan African Interdisciplinary Program, 1998 to 2000.
- Revised and expanded the “Black American” course from a one-semester course to a two-semester course, “**The Black Experience from 1619 to 1877,**” and “**The Black Experience from 1877 to Present.**”
- Increased course offerings for the Black Experience courses from two sections per semester in 1995 to eight sections in 2002.
- Created an Instructor’s Manual for the textbook “**Turbulent Voyage: Readings in African American Studies,**” – Collegiate Press - 2002.
- Served on the Advisory Board, Collegiate Press – “Turbulent Voyage.”
- Conducted student satisfaction surveys for Collegiate Press – “Turbulent Voyage.”
- Created, developed, and implemented a new course – “**Diversity in American Society.**”
- Submitted “**Diversity in American Society,**” “**The Black Experience from 1619 to 1877,**” and “**The Black Experience, 1877 to Present,**” and **Introduction to Pan African Studies** to the General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) for approval as General Education Program requirements – Area Studies and Cultural Diversity – approved 1999.

- Selected and attended the Harvard University Civil Rights Training Project, National Training Institute “Achieving Diversity in Higher Education,” November 2-3, 2001.
- Attended WebCT training to develop web-based courses to enhance the use of technology in the classroom.
- Developed and implemented a campus based diversity initiative in conjunction with the Psychology Department at the University of Akron, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003, \$20,000 grant from the Institute for Teaching and Learning.
- Worked with University Libraries and the Archives of the History of American Psychology to organize, plan, and implement a conference honoring Robert Guthrie, Professor Emeritus Psychology, University of Southern Illinois, and to receive his papers into the Archives of the History of American Psychology.
- Currently working with University Archives to honor Joe White, Professor Emeritus, Psychology and Psychiatry, University of California, Irvine, and to receive his papers into the Archives of History of American Psychology.