

SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference
Shaw University, Raleigh NC, April 2010
Transcript Video Recording #23
(Raw, unedited, no annotation)

Speaker 1 (00:00:17):

Yeah together, water time, water time, water time. We sit down by the banks of the river water time, water, time, water time. Come on. Y'all this is the church. When all God get to water, time water. When all, when all God's together, water time, water, time, water time.

Speaker 2 (00:01:52):

Let us bow our heads

Speaker 2 (00:01:56):

Delo. We thank you for the day. For this day. We thank you for all that we've seen and heard and felt. Yes, Lord, we thank you for the nostalgia that this 50th anniversary of SNCC brings us into. And we thank you for the reunion and the association that we are establishing. And now God, as we move towards the discussion of the black church and the black struggle, we pray that you will enable us to be the church and to come to terms with what we have historically experienced and what you are up to and what you are about. Now, we ask you to bless each person in this assembly. We ask you to keep us on one accord and in peace so that we will be able to engage the salient and important issues of this day. We ask these blessings in your name, our man,

Speaker 1 (00:02:57):

Amen.

Speaker 2 (00:03:00):

My name is, uh, David Forbes,

Speaker 3 (00:03:02):

Little louder.

Speaker 2 (00:03:04):

My name is David Forbes.

Speaker 4 (00:03:07):

Um, Bernard Lafayette

Speaker 2 (00:03:10):

Bernard. Lafayette is the coordinator of this panel and I got simply started while he was making his way, this way. I'm sure that he has, uh, a script of the direction that he wants to go. And I wanna start it out by giving him what a young lady gave me. She asked me if I set the panel up. I said, no, I didn't. I'm honored to be a part of it. She said, did anybody give any thought about some balance on the, on the, uh, um, panel? Um, there are no women on the panel. And I indicated that to the extent that I can, I will accommodate and, and account for that, by being sure that the dialogue that we have will provide an opportunity, uh, to, to address that I would make one historical note 50 years ago that wasn't a question in most places. And that might have been what led the planning committee, uh, to get persons who at least have that 50 year span of, of engagement, but that is not an excuse. And we certainly will endeavor to see that everybody's a part of it.

Speaker 5 (00:04:31):

Given behalf of all those that are present you.

Speaker 3 (00:04:44):

Thank you. Those

Speaker 2 (00:04:49):

Have the full picture. Uh, I laid my wife to rest on yesterday and of course the church I grew up in, you were expected after a loss to chill out, you know, and mourn for a while, but I have a commitment to social justice and social change. I ain't got time to die.

Speaker 4 (00:05:17):

Uh, thank you very much for getting things started. And I too want to, I'm so sorry. It's that's usually the way it is with me, but we gonna talk a little louder. Is that okay? Yeah. Okay. I'm sorry. The microphone. Uh, no, it's not the microphone. It's me.

Speaker 3 (00:05:36):

<laugh>

Speaker 4 (00:05:38):

No, <laugh> I, I can talk louder. I'm I just, uh, try to reserve energy, you know, that's why I speak softly, but, uh, we could do that. And if any point where you can't hear me, uh, please, you know, don't hesitate. Let no, um, first I wanna say that, uh, we were expecting, uh, Reverend, uh, Dr. CT Vivian to join us. And I don't know, uh, whether he's on the way or whether, um, he's, uh, gonna be with us or not. Uh, we don't have any information on that, but if he does, then we certainly will have him join us. Okay. All right. Uh, this is gonna be a little more informal because what we wanna do is to have some dialogue and some discussion, and, uh, uh, we gonna talk about some historical things, but we are also going to talk about some, uh, issues of today in terms of how we can apply the lessons of yesterday.

Speaker 4 (00:06:43):

And that's the value of coming together, not just for nostalgia or just having to feel good or see who's still around and to get some, uh, reports on transitions, but we wanna be able to, uh, dig deeply into some of the, uh, lessons that we have learned as a result of the struggle of the past and be able to, uh, codify those so that we can be able to teach them in, uh, a way that young people can, uh, uh, appreciate them and also apply them. Cuz we not just simply want to be, uh, cognitive here. We want to also be conative in terms of how we gonna be able to, to utilize this. And I, I, I really like the, what I see here in terms of the, uh, the elders and, uh, a lot of our youth young people and I'm looking forward to, uh, this dialogue and by the way, uh, we are up here, but it's really your, uh, session. So, you know, we want you to, to recognize that, okay, now, um, it, um,

Speaker 6 (00:08:02):

Can I suggest that we introduc

Speaker 4 (00:08:04):

Yes. You know where we're coming from? Yes. We should introduce ourselves. So they'll know where we've been, uh, where we are coming from. Yes. Okay. Why don't we start here please? Yes,

Speaker 7 (00:08:17):

Sir. Uh, yes, sir. Thank you. Okay. Um, good afternoon. All good afternoon. Um, I'm Nelson Johnson. Um, I pastor faith community church in Greensboro, North Carolina. Uh, and I serve as the director of an organization called the beloved community center. Uh, we obviously borrowed that name from Dr. King and, uh, our work in that area is to live into the fullness of our understanding of the gospel message. Um, I actually was not a part of SNCC. Uh, I got to, uh, Greensboro in 1965 as a student at North Carolina, a and T, but I worked very closely with

Macassa, uh, Willie Ricks and CLE sellers and, um, Kwame Stoker, uh, and they helped us to found an organization called the student organization for black unity. And in some sense, we came in behind SNCC and tried to pull together the next generation. Uh, so, uh, I've remained in my village and, uh, we have, uh, done what we did and, uh, I'll be glad to, as we move along, share some of the things, um, that we've been involved in, uh, and to expound as much as I can on my notion of what the black church is called to do at this moment in history.

Speaker 2 (00:09:55):

My name is David C. Forbes senior, and, uh, I am the pastor of Christian faith Baptist church here in Raleigh. I'm an alumnus of shell university. I'm a founding member of SNCC along with Charles Charlie Jones out of Charlotte. There were two of us who were founders. Uh, I, um, am excited, ecstatic to be here. Uh, I could use the traditional excuse not to be here and I believe it would be respected, but this is historic that's right. And I would not miss it for anything. Uh, I come prepared to share, uh, what my perspective is, uh, academically I bring the perspective of, uh, having studied sociology at the university of Virginia, uh, in a doctoral program. Uh, I'm an, a, B D in, in that program. Uh, but my subject or my area of expertise was the black church. And so academically I have some feel for history, uh, and substance, as it relates to social movements and organization. Uh, I am the chairman of the local host committee. Uh, so for months now we have worked hard to be sure that you would be comfortable and that this would be a successful conference. I look forward to the dialogue.

Speaker 4 (00:11:28):

Let's keep it a hand. We all right. Thank you. Yes. Um, I just arrived today, but I wanna say that, uh, this is one of the most impressive, well organized conferences I've been to in a long time. And, uh, we, uh, just, um, want to thank you, uh, Dr. Forbes, uh, for the work that you've put into it. We know it's been some hard work because we know what organizing and what it's like to put on these things. And, uh, we can certainly see the results of some good, hard work. So we don't want to, uh, neglect to tell you that we, uh, really appreciate you

Speaker 2 (00:12:13):

And appreciate, I see members of the national planning, uh, panel here as well. And they, they did the, the heavy lifting with, with the members of the national planning, uh, group. Please stand.

Speaker 4 (00:12:25):

Yes, please. Thank you. Okay. Thank you much. Thank you very much. Okay. Uh, we're gonna jump right into our subject. And the, the first thing we wanna do is, uh, to give the parameters of, um, an scope of our, uh, discussion course, it's, uh, up to you to reset that. Of course. Pardon? Can you hear me? Who are you? Who am I?

Speaker 2 (00:13:02):

That sounds like the sons of Skiva. We know who he is, but who are you? <laugh>,

Speaker 4 (00:13:10):

I'll tell you that. If you tell me who always said why we are here, who was that? Come on, you know, Tim? Yeah. Well, why are we here? That was Ella baker. You remember? Yes, right? Yes. She would always start off like that. She was the, uh, the third speaker we had at the Nashville. I mean, the, uh, the Selma rallies, the third speaker we had. Okay. And she, uh, that's where she started off. Now. We'll forget. They would forget. And that little woman just really round those people up, they were scared. Black folks in Selma were scared <laugh> but when they heard her voice and saw her size, I'll tell you the fear. I could see it in their eyes. You know, she had a way of doing that, but we we'll talk about that later, but <laugh>, my name is, uh, Bernard Lafayette, Jr. Tampa, Florida. Originally, I had four year scholarship and journalism at Florida, a and M because my newspaper high school newspaper won first place in the state.

Okay. From Milton high school, that was on Tampa. There's only, well, they had two black high schools, the other on the side of town, but, uh, I didn't go to, uh, journalism school. I went to American Baptist college in Nashville, Tennessee, where CT Vivian, and John Lewis and Paul Brooks, and some of the other snake workers went, uh, there

Speaker 2 (00:14:46):

Where their empty seats. Please raise your hand.

Speaker 4 (00:14:49):

Yes. Okay.

Speaker 2 (00:14:50):

Their seats

Speaker 4 (00:14:51):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So, uh, skipping ahead, I, um, was, um, not finished, uh, American Baptist college and went on to Boston university and then to the Harvard university and focused on, uh, educational administration. So, uh, I spent most of my time in higher education and also in principal of high school, uh, middle school, elementary school, and Dean of a university, Alabama state university. Well, in fact, okay. So, uh, I've been in the educational community. I was, uh, recently at, um, at, uh, university of Rhode Island. And, uh, in the last year I moved to Atlanta and I'm at Emory university now as distinguished senior scholar in residence, uh, there, and we are working on some projects right there in Atlanta. And, uh, we share some of those with you too, but we wanna start off, uh, reflecting now. I think it'd be important for us to reflect back in, uh, our history, the role of the church in the movement. What role did it play? So why don't so deal with that particular question among us, and then we'll each, uh, get a chance to share some of our own personal experience and thoughts about that. And then we are gonna quickly open it up to, uh, the audience for questions and also sharing. Cuz we see some people in here who can, uh, be a special resources for us. And, uh, we'll introduce them later on this particular topic. You know who you are <laugh> yes. Will you start with this?

Speaker 7 (00:16:38):

Will I start? Yes,

Speaker 4 (00:16:39):

Please.

Speaker 7 (00:16:40):

Um, first just let me acknowledge this moment. I just got here today and I'm just overwhelmed at this magnificent gathering, uh, at all of the opportunities for sharing stories, uh, building, uh, renewing or acquaintances. So I just want to say thanks to the organizers of this historic occasion, uh, and I'm very blessed to be on this panel. I've heard a lot about brother, uh, Lafayette, uh, and, uh, Dr. Forbes, I've known here in Raleigh, but on the question of, um, the history of the black church, I'm, I'm not in academia, but let me just say some things, uh, uh, the black church was born in struggle. That's where it got, it started in the midst of the obscenity of slavery. People were able to find a word and they were able to work with that word to help find a way. And so I think that's our legacy and it endured, uh, uh, the long night of Jim Crowism in which it had to find a way to anchor a community that, uh, left the plantation without a dime or a dollar and, and, and, and staggered into a whole new reality.

Speaker 7 (00:18:12):

The church was the anchoring place for all of that. And, uh, so, uh, my sense of the, and so therefore it was historically positioned, uh, to do, uh, some of the magnificent things that it has done. I know that before we finish our discussion, we will get into some critiques of what the church is not doing and some of the weaknesses, but that makes sense only against the

background of what it has done and therefore lifts up for us the potential of what it can become. Uh, and I wanna stand for that, uh, this evening, uh, and I hope to get a chance to talk a little bit about what we've tried to do in our work. And so through the, uh, civil rights movement, uh, and, uh, the, it just couldn't have happened without the church. Uh, I see my friend, John and, uh, Larry Little here, uh, the Darrell hunt case over in Winston, Salem, uh, no way to win that case without the, uh, and Darrell hunt spent 18 years in jail, uh, charged with, uh, murder or convicted of murder.

Speaker 7 (00:19:25):

And, but for the persistence and the determination and the spirit of the church, he would be dead today. And so I just wanna put in perspective that the church has a major role to play. Uh, and let me say this, uh, is, uh, uh, when you have been, been, been the victim of stuff, uh, I'm trying to find a way to say this, uh, say it when, when, when, uh, the, the, our book of faith says those who have ears, let them hear when you have endured hardships and been demeaned, and that you can hear something that other people can hear power and privilege, uh, blocks the hearing. So those who have eyes, let them see those who have ears, let them hear. And so we have an accumulated history of people who are the, uh, inheritors and the protectors of a certain legacy. And I think when all of that history is there and the church in some sense is the guardian of it.

Speaker 7 (00:20:41):

Uh, it may not be doing a good job, but it's the guardian of it. And this whole notion, uh, I heard King belled out unearned suffering is redemptive that there is some tremendous power in black people and in the church, if we can find a way <laugh> to really be faithful to the calling of the one that we are, uh, that we have committed to follow. So I just wanna say that as just some initial reflections on the black church and to located in history as a unique and powerful God given instrument, uh, that holds out the promise, uh, for transformative work in a major way. Hmm.

Speaker 8 (00:21:29):

Thank you very much. Okay. That's what,

Speaker 2 (00:21:36):

Yes. The sociologists who are honest acknowledge that the black church is the most powerful institution to have been evolved in America.

Speaker 2 (00:21:56):

As Reverend Johnson has indicated, it emerged out of the pathos of slavery and exploitation. It emerged in spite of laws that said that it could not emerge. So if we want to have any cues as to the power of the African American church, understand that it was unconstitutional, it was not allowed. It was forgotten. It was against the law for more than three or four black folks to come together for any reason. And certainly if you're gonna come together, don't come together for prayer and join up with the creator. That's a very, I give the, the antebellum whites credit. They, they knew that that was a powerful combination, prayer and people coming together on common cause, uh, the black church was called therefore, according to the historians, the invisible institutions, it was invisible because there was no building, it was not allowed to build. It was, it required people to, to, to go to secret places and to, uh, worship under nature, the sky under the, the trees under Bush harbors, Bush harbors, uh, yes, even the music and the ethnomusicology gives us a clue as to what it was like.

Speaker 2 (00:23:22):

If you go back to the 15 hundreds and the 16 hundreds, the Negro spiritual still away is an invocation to steal away from the watchful eyes of the master, still away to Jesus. Uh, yeah, you need to steal away to Jesus, but still away from the master, still away to the private place where we can meet and have common calls. Therefore, the African American church, even before we

begin to talk about civil rights and struggle is to recognize as brother Johnson has said that the church was born in response to, and in spite of struggle. So struggle is endemic to the experience, the common experience of African Americans living in white America. Uh, the sociologists will tell you that more important than the social movement is to recognize that the African American church, it has given his historically social place, social location, because the institution of slavery meant disorganization and disaggregation, but the church enabled social location, social place, the church facilitated social solidarity, the coming together to recognize that we can do more together than we can individually. But when we come together, we can do major things. The, the, the church served as a basis of primary organization in the slave community. Again, slavery was about disorganization. It was, it drove people away. It took mamas and dads apart and children from their parents. And the church became the place of glue of drawing people together. The church became a social center.

Speaker 2 (00:25:18):

Department of welfare was not the first institution that responded to people in need. It was the African American church early on understanding that by the nature of God's provision, none of us are always down and out when I'm down and out, you are up and the uppers help the downers. So that together the church has served as a basis for social. Uh, as a social center, the church has served. The African American church has served as the rightful, uh, extra of America. All right, there is no dividing, the word beyond reality. And generally European theology has been a theology that has been head, but not hard, but the African American church has brought soul to theology. My white brothers tell me often, you know, David, I wish we could do it. Like y'all well, we can do it cause we are free. But historically white field agents have not been free to be real. And to tell it like at TIS <laugh> I'll stop there.

Speaker 9 (00:26:37):

All right.

Speaker 4 (00:26:43):

And that's a comma, not a, uh, you gonna be saying some more, right. I got more. Okay, good. <laugh>

Speaker 4 (00:26:54):

Very good. Okay. Well, uh, I'll just share a few notes here and then we can open it up for some discussion. Uh, first of all, why the church, um, the role that it played? Uh, yeah. Why, why the church and the role that it played. First of all, the church here in America, as it relates to the African Americans is something that was not brought with them. It was something that they acquired. Once they reached here, they had their own religions. Let me rephrase that. We <laugh> had our own religions, our own culture, religious, uh, expressions and that sort of thing. But we came here. We were cut off from that. In fact, uh, we were proselytized mm-hmm <affirmative> and we were only given, uh, at some stage only Bibles to read, like it was when we were in jail, remember, and somebody made a chess set out of it. Did you know that? Or they took the front page of the Bible that, that blank page and made a, a chessboard and took some biscuits that we used to get and took wet those biscuits and remold them. And we made a chess set in parchment. So it's a strange thing, but some people would do with the word

Speaker 10 (00:28:33):

Strange indeed <laugh>

Speaker 4 (00:28:40):

They, they passed out Bibles and they that's why a lot of our, uh, churches, uh, or other our schools, um, African American black schools, what we call 'em were really, uh, established to train preachers. Yeah. Cuz they wanna make sure that we got the message. Okay. And that sort of thing. So what was interesting about the, uh, church is that we acquired it and then we

transformed it to deal with our own issues in our own lives. So one of the things that, um, characteristics we have here is that the church was, um, an inspiration in the movement. It had been that all along as our, my colleagues, very brilliant colleagues, uh, set for us in terms of the Genesis of the black church in America. It had always been a source of inspiration. Now what he was talking about here in terms of the, uh, the preaching and the expression and the soul sort of thing. That's because we are an oral oral culture. It even people who can't read and write can preach because they can feel it and they can express it. And we learn more about what we hear than what we can read. Cause remember, a lot of that stuff was written by Europeans and you know, some of those words, uh, will put you to sleep

Speaker 11 (00:30:19):

<laugh>

Speaker 4 (00:30:20):

Yeah. You know, when we learn our alphabets as children, we sang them. And if we could learn the song, the tune, that's what, see we go by what we hear. If we can get the tune, the words will come. In fact, we use new words. We don't really need to use the old words. That's what happened with the freedom songs we had to tune. We just put the lyrics there to express the current needs that we were being, uh, being met. So that oral oral culture, uh, was a thing. And the music and the singing was the inspiration. That's how we maintain our spiritual strength to endure in the struggle. So first of all, the church was inspiration for us. Even the preaching was a poem. This that's why Martin Luther king was so popular. Not only it was the way he put together words, but it was so poetic.

Speaker 4 (00:31:20):

And, but really the sound of his voice, he was singing all the time. It was a song. I have a dream. We, we know that we can, you know, the children like to hear it. They can learn it. In fact, we ought to teach 'em to do that, by the way. So my point is that it's the, the, the inspiration, the music and the preaching, we call it hooping and some of our churches. Okay. <laugh> yeah. Something. Yeah. That's what you call tuning. Yeah. See that that's right. When you saw tuning that's right. That's that's part of the music. And guess what music is about movement and liberation and liberation that's cause see, you can't stand still. Cuz movement means not standing still movement. And that's why folks shout and carry on. They can't stand still. That's right. Okay. Run up and down the aisle. Walk the benches. They don't know about walking the benches. I do. I'll tell you about it later during the break.

Speaker 11 (00:32:22):

<laugh>

Speaker 4 (00:32:25):

The next thing it was unification. He touched on it. The church was the only place where you could go and find people of different ages, gender I'm talking about all genders. They just now talking about, uh, this, uh, you know, bias, this and trans that and all that always had it and a big secret. We didn't, we didn't preach about it. You know what I'm saying? <laugh> yeah. We, we, uh, you know, we, we accept all people. Yeah. We wanna go someplace where you can find all people accepted and, and loved and cared for you go to the church regardless of their orientation. And also regardless of their age and the most important thing. The profession, guess who? My Sunday school teacher was, <laugh> my English teaching high school.

Speaker 4 (00:33:18):

That was my Sunday school. I went to school six days a week. Yeah. That's why and kids who go to school by the way, they usually don't drop outta school if they go to church in Sunday school. Alright. That could save 50% of the dropouts right there. Mm-hmm <affirmative> yeah. Going to Sunday school going to church. Did you know that? Yeah. Okay. We'll go into that.

Later. Church serves a great purpose. Unification of classes of people, the banker, as well as a janitor say we get same church. Okay. That's where you can find them. All right. Talent people. You can find the inmates and the mates at church. Okay. The next thing was the spirituality interpretation. Now that's the thing that really fascinates me. Do you know the church? In fact, uh, this religion, okay. Is the only body of knowledge that's able to translate a tragedy into a victory. That's right. No other sociology, political science, the church is the only one.

Speaker 4 (00:34:33):

That's why we're able to endure the deaths that we experience. Okay. And, and, and, and beating up on the bridge and all that sort of thing and sell my Alabama. How in the world could you get, find out people run over by horses and tear gas and being beaten in the head on the Selma bridge, go back to the church and saying, we shall overcome only in church, only in church we shall overcome. So we're able to interpret tragedies into victories, which gives you the strengths to continue to go on because you are, you're accomplishing your goal. Uh, the next thing is that the genius of the church here is the fact that we are able to have something in common with our oppressors, like a Presbyterian is a Presbyterian. A Baptist is a Baptist and a Methodist is a Methodist. And a church of God is a church of God and a seven day Adventist.

Speaker 4 (00:35:44):

And just going down the line, we have something in common with them. Can you imagine the oppressor and the oppressed sharing the same liturgy? Huh? That was one of the things that gave the church black church, the power to call out the conscience of the oppressor from the same scripture. Okay. In fact, some the same hymns we sang, 'em a little different, you know, but words were the same, you know what I mean? We did a little thing to 'em, you know what I mean? But we could say that we have something in common here. All right. And somehow all those words had to be made flash. Okay. And so my point is, uh, that's why the church was so central. Now a little facts here, more one institution that, that was bombed more than any other institution was a church. And somebody would do a study on that young people, all the churches that were bombed.

Speaker 4 (00:36:55):

And sometimes people were in the church when they were bombed. Okay. So, uh, the attack of our opponents was on the church. Not too many bars were bombed now I think in some place, right. We burned down what, uh, bouldering alley or some, one time, you know, they didn't integrate. But for the most part, when we look at what they attacked schools was another yes. Okay. Right behind churches, you had schools. All right. And then I like to be able to see how many church schools got bombed, cuz sometimes we use 'em for both things like in, uh, you know, Cole, Mississippi, uh, Wilcox county, you know, that, uh, the, the church in the school was the same. Absolutely. That's what had, so the church played a central role as he was saying in bringing everybody together. And uh, there's no coincidence that it served its purpose in terms of restoring us, inspiring us and also being able to help us interpret okay.

Speaker 4 (00:38:06):

The theology of the church. And uh, even those who did not believe in a particular faith found comfort in the church. And there's an interesting relationship between the funeral homes and the church. Okay. And we can have church outside as well as inside. If Harry Belafonte was here. Now he would tell you that the platform that we used, uh, in Selma in Montgomery, Alabama at St. Jude's that's where that night before we went into Montgomery, after Selma March, we met at St. Jude's Catholic church. And by the way, in the black community, all during the days of segregation, we had Catholic church and it was the only integrated church cause they had nuns there and they had Catholic schools and, and, and, and they were white folk and black children church only. So they made St. Jude, a separate city, church, city, school, hospital, and that kind of thing. That's very interesting. That's an interesting study right there. So, uh, the, the platform by the way, was made out of, uh, coffins <laugh> yeah. The platform that people performed on

at St. Jude, they couldn't find any other, something. They could hold them. And it was ironic that they rated the, the funeral homes and found caskets and build a platform church only way you can do it, I'll stop there. And, um, why don't we, uh, give some other reflective thoughts, maybe a couple of sentences. And then we open up for question answers.

Speaker 2 (00:39:59):

The church has also been, uh, historically a place of mutual aid. In other words, I can't do all that I can do by myself, but if we gather what we have to gather together, we can do more, uh, understand that the church African American church should not be viewed as a monolith in terms of its stratification, nor in terms of struggle or movement today, you would hear a lot of churches suggest that in 1960, when the SNCC conference was set up, that all churches were aboard bunk, bunk, only the most progressive churches. And even to this day, only the most progressive churches have an agenda for social justice. Would that be right? Mendez that's right. Okay. So that, that's a, a key point to make the church has historically, uh, had a sensitivity to social justice because there was less justice for us than anybody. So therefore, whether the church was activists or not, it understood misery. And the lack of justice, the issue of struggle needs to be understood. Very often, we give it nomenclature as it relates to the civil rights movement, but for African Americans, black folks living in white America just to exist is a struggle.

Speaker 2 (00:41:38):

You don't have to look at civil rights to see struggle. Also understand that the church has historically understood that terrorism did not begin with Ben Laden. It is an American institution, it's an American institution because African Americans have absorbed more terror than any people in the history of the world. They want to suggest that it's the Holocaust. And I don't want to get into an argument about that, but 400 years is certainly different from world war II. I arrest my case.

Speaker 7 (00:42:24):

Amen. You almost rested mine. Um, you know, I wanna say, I wanna take a little bit of a different track. Uh, I really appreciate the powerful insights about that way over, which we've come, um, and how the church was a source of inspiration, uh, and economic institution, um, a kind of UNFI of the community, uh, overcoming of class divisions. Uh, I wanna affirm all of that. Uh, I struggle with the church now, um, help me hold it ghost. Amen. Uh,

Speaker 7 (00:43:20):

And I, I wanna say the reason it seems to me to gather up all of the stories and the legacy and the meaning is because it points us towards something that we ought to be capable of doing and more, uh, that's that's where it comes to me. And I struggle with what is it that happens to a people to get con disconnected from that such that 50 miles down the road. There is a slave camp in North Carolina, and those of us who have lived through, uh, whose history is anchored in slavery, uh, somehow are unhooked from that. I'm troubled by that, you know? Uh, and I, I just wanna, and I know we're gonna get to that, so let me not get there before you get there. Uh, let me, let me just lay this out just from a kind of my perspective. I see the church having, uh, there's many ways this can be said, but let me say it the way that I can say it kind of three central roles.

Speaker 7 (00:44:32):

One is its pastoral priestly work the care for the temple. Uh, making sure that we are worshipping every Sunday, uh, counseling with people, marrying people, having funerals, uh, it's a very important part of the life of the church. Uh, and I want to affirm that. I also think that the church has the responsibility of entering into the life of the struggle of people around it in, uh, in perhaps as forceful way as, as it can engaging the powers, engaging the principalities, lifting up creative ways that people can, uh, use their faith and, uh, to continue to press forward to a better life. Uh, and I would say that on the first one, churches do broadly well on that one. Uh, I think that that, that, that we would find churches doing very well on the second one, not quite so much, uh, and

that somehow we have gotten unhooked or detached from seeing that not as something that you do after you have done everything else after you've had your funeral after you've had your worship service, if there's any time left, then we may get involved in some of these other things that's killing us in the community.

Speaker 7 (00:46:04):

So I just want to say that, I think that that's a very important thing. And let me just raise the third thing. I, I think that, uh, uh, how did we, um, get to a place after the tremendous struggles, uh, and successes of the sixties, such that any neighborhood you go in, in any town of any size, huge portions of that neighborhood hanging on by their very fingernails, trying to make meaning of life? Uh, I don't think I'm exaggerating too much. If we look at our youth, uh, we, we see something there and I, I wanna raise not so much to just probe that question, but I wanna put another question before us is I think the church has not had a long term vision. And so we are almost trapped into the culture where capitalism makes what it can make as fast as it can.

Speaker 7 (00:47:16):

And it kind of just lives like that. And, uh, but I remember Moses mm-hmm <affirmative>, um, you know, this whole matter of having a vision or being giving a vision and receiving that vision, that you would move a whole people, uh, to have the greatest work stoppage in the history of the world to walk out of a nation and to find their way through the hardships and horrors of a willingness and believe that, uh, this is a faith that, that, that keeps you moving, that you can get across all of that and enter into a place called the land of promise. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. It seems to me that that, that, that that's not, uh, what, what I wanna say is the hooping is really, really good. And John, I wish I could hit it. Like you hit it. <laugh>, uh, but if it's hooked to this journey, that's when it's what it's supposed to be.

Speaker 7 (00:48:16):

When it's hooked to just kind of itself, it actually loses its salt as it were. Uh, and so just the last word on this vision. I Marvel, I met a man I've been talking to him recently, uh, at, uh, at how, uh, the son of a carpenter, uh, in a peasant context could have a vision. That's so powerful that he said, I want you to do this in Judea. I want you to do it in Samaria. And I want you to take this thing to the other, most parts of the earth. And actually the strand that he was lifting up was the kingdom of God. Mm-hmm, <affirmative> the reign of God, the weight of God, the method of God. And so that none be confused on this. He prayed that it would come, uh, on ghetto street mm-hmm <affirmative> in Raleigh, that it would come in every neighborhood as it is in heaven.

Speaker 7 (00:49:19):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So there wasn't a skipping of earth to get to heaven. There was using heaven to empower you, to engage your situation and transform it into a different kind of place. Mm-hmm, <affirmative>, that's the kind of gospel I think that grabs us and makes us wanna press on anyhow. Uh, and I, and I just wanna say that I think we are challenged to kind of see how that history that we ought to celebrate, and that deserve to be celebrate, can be connected to the moment so that it is a servant of a movement, uh, and not, uh, um, I don't wanna use Justice's thing just as over in Greensboro and say, I hope that this city in movement doesn't become a Moli instead of museum. Uh, but I think that history has to, has to serve the struggle. And, uh, I just wanna stand for that. And I'm sure that most of you do here, but it seems to me that somewhere along the line, that's the discussion we need to get into.

Speaker 12 (00:50:22):

Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 4 (00:50:25):

Questions. Let's go. Uh, I saw your hand first as 1, 2, 3, 4. You know who you are.

Speaker 13 (00:50:33):

Okay. Uh, my name is Johnny Parham. I live in New York city, uh, beginning with the desegregation of public education in this country. The white church responded by setting up Christian academies throughout this country. And in large urban cities, the net result of that is that a majority of public school in rollies are minority. So, and these are cities where whites are the majority. So one has to conclude that certainly white children are not going to school. They're going to their Christian academ supported by their respective churches. Um, I'm just wondering what is a projected view for the black church in the face of this? Because well, in, in my city, um, in Harlem, there's a church on every corner, uh, in Brooklyn, New York, which is known as the borough of churches, uh, in Harlem, there's one church AIAN that has established a high school, elementary school, fabulous school.

Speaker 13 (00:51:47):

People are fighting to get in, in Queens at Allen AME church, Floyd flakes, church, marvelous school, one in Brooklyn, Gardner Taylor established years ago at Concord Baptist church, marvelous school. Those are the three, the others are Catholic schools in the diocese of closing, many of them. And yet we have this proliferation of black churches, a Ford foundation study showed something years ago, headed by Emmett Carson, that black people give a higher percentage of their income to charitable causes than any other group. And that money goes to the church. So I'm just wondering, where is the church in this year, 2010, we have a marvelous history and it's played in the significant role in getting us here now, but our children are suffering and education. And yet it was the church which served as the source that began black education in this country. So I'm just wondering, I'd like,

Speaker 2 (00:53:06):

I would like to put it in the context of the really marvelous, dynamic, radical message from, uh, Mr. Belafonte, if there is to be an agenda that begs for attention at this time in America, sir, you have identified a major agenda item that the African American church can ill afford not to enter into the issue of education. The African American church historically has been a bellwether of education, but in terms of getting serious about academy and about, uh, providing meaningful opportunities, perhaps the African American church is on its way in that a number of churches, uh, at least, uh, trying to have summer camps and other kinds of academic enrichment programs. But the issue now is that we must move full steam ahead in seeking to counter what is a massive and major movement, uh, among, uh, uh, Ang Anglo, uh, persons, uh, one sees, uh, even in public education, uh, a, a real shift here in wake county.

Speaker 2 (00:54:33):

Uh, the school board has abandoned, uh, the issue of diversity for neighborhood schools and neighborhood schools. I said it on w S a and an interview today, neighborhood schools remind me that I went all the way through elementary school and high school and neighborhood schools, meaning black schools. I never got a new textbook in my entire career. The new books went to the white schools, and when they got to our schools, when the white schools got new books, they sent the old books to the black schools. There was not even any place in the old days. You wrote your name in the book. Those eight lines had been used. That's what happens with neighborhood schools? College E Woodson said that when white folks and black folks cooperate white folks, do the operating and blacks do the co

Speaker 4 (00:55:32):

The Nashville movement and the, uh, role of the church and what lessons we learned from there. Uh, we were kind of fortunate, uh, in, um, Nashville because we, we had, um, James Lawson who, uh, actually, uh, was a student at Vanderbilt university in the divinity school. And, um, he started these, uh, workshops at first Baptist church, Kelly Miller Smith, senior, and, uh, Kelly Miller Smith was also a faculty member at American Baptist college. Uh, and that's why John Lewis and, um, uh, Jim bevel and myself, and some of the others, uh, were quickly exposed to these workshops. And the church was actually one that actually, um, provided these. It was, uh,

first Baptist, and there was another Methodist church there in Nashville where we had our training at STS me to the moment I think of it before we, uh, leave. And, um, the individuals who were head of the, uh, organizations related to the movement were mostly ministers.

Speaker 4 (00:57:01):

The head of, uh, the NAACP, for example, for the state of Tennessee, uh, was my church history teacher disagreement. All right. Uh, Kelly Miller Smith was the head of the Nashville, Christian leadership council affiliate of S SCLC with Martin Luther king. Uh, so there was that interaction already, you know, with the church. And, um, the interesting thing is that when these ministers, um, collaborated with us, they gave us the lead. It was the strangest thing. When I think about it, cuz usually adults organize young people. They want to be in charge of them. I mean, you know, cuz after all, they don't really develop your ability to have good judgment until you get 21. Did you know that, oh, that's why they, uh, voting used to be 21, you know, except in Texas and Kentucky, you know what I mean? But um, yeah, so they, strangely enough trained us and then left us, you know, Marion Barry, Diane Nash, you know, uh, uh, Catherine, uh, Brooks, I mean just go down the line, you know, all of those, uh, young people who came from different schools, Kenneth Frazier, uh, you know, alpha and uh, ended up being a Methodist minister.

Speaker 4 (00:58:29):

Okay. We had 'em we had 'em from, uh, Vanderbilt. We had some white students and from Peabody and scar, so it was an interated group. Now the interesting thing was that not only did they train us and gave us the body of, of, of uh, information, uh, and frankly was from a biblical point of view, new Testament mm-hmm <affirmative> cause you're talking about turn the other cheek. Now I had experience where I had turned the other cheek and not hit back. So it wasn't anything new to me. My grandmother did a lot of that. In fact, I turned all my cheeks, I turned all my cheeks, you know what I mean? <laugh> and, and I didn't hit back and then I loved her.

Speaker 4 (00:59:22):

So I already learned how to love folks who, you know what I mean, bother your cheeks <laugh> so, so that was not the, the issue for me, for example, my issue had to do with, uh, could you actually love someone who would spit on you and someone who would slap you and call you a bunch of nasty names? I mean, that's why I really got involved in the movement. That's my confession. You know, I was for civil rights, I wanted change, but the really thing I wanna find out if I can connect with those Bible verses that says love to those who, uh, do, yeah, spitefully use you, people who mess you up, folks who lie on you and stuff like that. And, and, and people who, uh, you know, act hateful things towards you. Can you actually love them? I mean, that's what I wanted to find out. Cause see, I used to belong to a gang in Philadelphia and, and we knew what to do with, you know, people who act that way, you know what I'm talking about. Yeah. I don't even discuss that cuz I don't know the statute of limitations,

Speaker 4 (01:00:32):

But the church, this whole nonviolence, that's what we're talking about here in terms of the movement and being able to embrace that and understand it and appreciate it. Well that's that gave us that the thing that really amazed me is that when we took off on the freedom rides, for example, uh, we were ready to go in Nashville after the, uh, John Lewis went on the original ride. I couldn't go cause they required you. If you were under 18 for your parents to sign. And I sent things down to my parents, you know what I mean? One finished the eighth grade and the other was seventh grade. You know, I was the first one to finish high school with my family and I'd send those papers down there for them to sign them, you know, so I could go on and um, I called and they didn't, you know, respond to the thing I said, I need these papers right away, cuz y'all just sign 'em and send 'em so I can go send 'em to core Congress, racially equality. So I can give 'em this freedom ride. And they said, uh, do you think we didn't read them?

Speaker 4 (01:01:33):

I said, you read it. I mean, what would you do there? They said, we're not gonna sign your death warrant. No, the amazing thing is that these ministers after training us, okay, turned us loose. We didn't feel like we were radicals because our professors and our preachers were saying

Speaker 14 (01:01:53):

Same thing.

Speaker 4 (01:01:54):

Yeah. All right. And then we got beaten up in Montgomery. They came and joined us, CT, Vivian, and those ministers,

Speaker 14 (01:02:02):

You know, like that

Speaker 4 (01:02:04):

Copeland and all of them, they came down to and joined us in jail. Can you imagine your professor being in jail with you?

Speaker 14 (01:02:10):

<laugh>

Speaker 4 (01:02:13):

Yeah. That's the church in action and it still amazed me about the Nashville thing. Okay. That, that, I think that really made a, a difference in terms of the fact that we went on to other things, because that was probably coming out of our roots and that kind of appreciation now, as he said, we ran into situations later on the movement where some churches like Chicago, they didn't that's right. Chicago. And like some places in Mississippi, you name all the rest of them. And they said, don't bring that mess here. Mm-hmm <affirmative> okay. Cause we, we are not about that. And they had been taught that politics was corrupt and dirty. Okay. And the church wanted to stay pure away from that politics. So don't be talking about voter registration here. All right. Cause they didn't want to get involved in it. So that was a message.

Speaker 2 (01:03:09):

And Dr. King was essentially pushed out of the national Baptist convention. Listen to it. The progressive national convention was born because of that because Dr. King was pushed out the largest Baptist national convention did not want to hear nothing about civil rights. So the record needs to be put straight. That's. The reason I said earlier that the African American church is not a monolith. There are some positive, progressive, uh, sales throughout the nation. There have been many conservative African American churches. And let me say a word about the white churches have been some very progressive white churches mm-hmm <affirmative> that were, were not silent during the civil rights movement. It was dangerous at least economically, if not physically for white pastors to preach true gospel mm-hmm <affirmative>, but some did some did and lost their pulpits and some were killed because they were viewed as being, uh turncoats mm-hmm <affirmative> to the mainstream community. So the whole notion of struggle has always been a very dangerous proposition, both in the white community and the black community. Because again, let me give you some of my sociology, the purpose of the church, be it white or black is to sacrifice civility, to sanctify, to cover wrong and politics.

Speaker 4 (01:04:39):

Hmm. Sociological interpretation. <laugh> can't get that at. Uh Canor <laugh> there's somebody with the mic back there. Yes. Trying to speak. Okay. And uh, don't keep your hands up. Uh, so we can know who's next. Okay. Well all of y'all are next

Speaker 2 (01:04:57):

<laugh>

Speaker 15 (01:05:00):

<laugh> um, good evening. My name is Bridget Robinson and um, I just wanna make a comment as I listen to you, gentlemen, talk about the church's involvement in the civil rights movement. I can't help, but think back to the black church's involvement in the abolitionist movement in America. That's right. Um, Benjamin Qualls wrote that religion in the black church was the alpha, the omega of all things. Um, he said that ministers made up the majority of the leaders in the abolitionist movement and not the minority as some would think. And he said that the black church broke be, um, from some white denominations, not all because they found their voices kind of restricted mm-hmm <affirmative> and they wanted freedom to be able to speak because the abolitionist battle was twofold. It was to abolish slavery, but to also fight for racial equality, which they felt that some white abolitionists did not address racial equality. And so I just wanna say that when I look at the black church in the history of black America, it's always changed to suit the needs of black people. And I know some people now are disillusioned with the church's, um, involvement, but the church is still here. And if we get back to why the church, why the black church was founded and what it has done for us, I think that maybe we can kind of recapture some of that spirit that was in the abolitionist movement. And that was in the civil rights movement.

Speaker 4 (01:06:35):

Okay.

Speaker 7 (01:06:35):

GI oh brother. Laia could I, yes.

Speaker 4 (01:06:37):

Sure. Go ahead. GI

Speaker 7 (01:06:39):

Know what's next. Um, go ahead. I want to, to celebrate with you that piece of history, uh, and, uh, to just appreciate that. I think we gotta continually do that. On the other hand, we've got to continually ask ourselves hard questions. Uh, this is not cheap grace. Um, the gentleman from New York made a statement, um, and he asked a question, why do we have so many churches? And why is the plight, uh, particularly those who are trapped on the bottom seeming to get worse and perhaps not get better? I think that's a fair question to ask. Uh, and, and I think we gotta try to struggle with it some, uh, and I wanna raise this, uh, just to put it out. Uh, some of it, I think, has to do with how we have, uh, who was it saying that the, how we have understood and preached the gospel mm-hmm <affirmative>, you know, uh, and, and in, in one sense you can think of the core of the gospel as love, you know, uh, and love has many faces.

Speaker 7 (01:08:04):

It has a face called justice. Uh, it has a face called forgiveness. Uh, it has a face called healing and reconciliation, and it has a face called engaging the powers and the principalities. And, um, and in some sense, if all of those faces are not represented in the way you handle the gospel message, I think it distorts it in the last analysis. Uh, and, uh, so, uh, I'm just thinking that the church on the one hand can be the most respected, uh, and the most feared institution, or it can be, uh, one that's really not feared and not that much respected. And that, that goes to, I think what it is we do now, let me raise this. The proliferation of churches is not bad, you know, uh, I think we need a lot of churches. As a matter of fact, I think a lot of small churches make sense if the gospel you preach in them allows those churches to work together.

Speaker 7 (01:09:19):

So that, uh, and, and that's right at the heart of it, there's neither, uh, J nor Greek male, nor female. In other words, how do we actually come together and get things done as a unit? Because some of the smaller churches are able to minister to people a little bit better, cause they're close

to them. But actually if each one sees itself as a separate entity, I think it has missed the core of the gospel. The church is one and it has to function as one. So I wanna raise that. And finally, just let me say, to put the question, um, square that there's always been progressive churches and reactionary churches. For me, the question is not, that has always been that way, but what's the trend in the church, which way is it moving? And what's informing that movement. And what I'm seeing is that I think there's a great, uh, movement toward an acculturating, the church into the dominant, uh, culture, even though it remains black, you know? Uh, so anyway, I just wanna offer those reflections to kind of kick this discussion a little bit and let's, let's, let's try to work through some stuff here.

Speaker 4 (01:10:35):

Okay. Lemme say this, um, next time we have this. Yeah, yeah. Next time. Yeah. They, uh, uh, what we wanna do is this, I had my hand up, the reason they, uh, just a minute, I'm the moderator.

Speaker 7 (01:10:51):

<laugh>

Speaker 4 (01:10:54):

The reason why they got me to be the moderator is cuz I know how to deal with conflict and confusion. Okay. Right. This is where we deal with conflict and confusion for lessons for young folks. Okay. Is, uh, a lot of people want to, uh, get involved in this discussion. They want to have, um, um, a chance to, you know, do that. The problem is, I don't know what, uh, next year you have more time actually, cuz we going do this so we can have a lot more time with these kind of things. Cause we gotta take time. But in, but for the day, what we wanna do is just to listen to your questions, that's good. And then we'll have a chance to choose which ones you wanna respond to. So you write down the school around the question. So we, sometimes the question is more important than the response that's right. That's why I don't wanna miss any of your questions. So let's start here and if you wouldn't mind, uh, if you could make them succinct and uh, sharpen 'em up a little bit.

Speaker 16 (01:11:54):

That would be good. Right. Um, my question is, um, I had a previous question about the, um, first off, my name is April Clauson. I am a senior history major at North Carolina central university. Um, basically, um, my first one would be, well, the question that I have for you all is about the, um, the black church and the state of the black church today and um, and my personal experience and also in seeing or observing, uh, the other black churches around, um, not only North Carolina, but also in other states that I visited. Um, I, I realized that the black church in itself and I may be wrong, has become money hungry and it's become more commercialized than to help the black people and the black community. And my question to y'all to you all to you, gentlemen, is what is the black church going to do about the issue of who can build the biggest church who can build the, the build, um, bringing the most people and what are you going to do to save our community rather than saying I can bring in or I can put the most money in this, the offering basket at the end of the Sunday.

Speaker 16 (01:12:57):

Got it,

Speaker 4 (01:12:58):

Got it. Okay. Come right on down. There's a complaint down here in the front that the bike is being captured and capture it. <laugh> so,

Speaker 17 (01:13:06):

Okay.

Speaker 4 (01:13:06):

What we want you to do is that when you finish, uh, throw the mic down that way.

Speaker 17 (01:13:11):

Just toss it.

Speaker 4 (01:13:12):

Yes. Yeah.

Speaker 17 (01:13:14):

Okay. My, my name is Carolyn McCrery and, uh, I happen to teach at the blessed to teach at the interdenominational, the theological center in Atlanta, Georgia. And I'm an ordained, uh, minister. And I really appreciate you speaking about the women and the movement. And I one, my question may be, uh, maybe indicative of the fact that there are not women. Uh, there also speaks to the fact that women were not allowed in leadership positions in the church as they were allowed in SNCC. And I wanna stop for a minute and say, brother Forbes, thank you for being here in spite of, and in light of your loss. So I don't want to belittle that at all. My real question has to do with the fact that women suffering prison, population, quadrupled, HIV aids, young girls, older women, my age, uh, violence against women. I, I, I contend that if we don't look at the violence perpetrated against women, as well as the internalized oppression that we get from churches and our theology, that we are second class citizens made from some part that might be lower or submissive in all of that, that we won't have our full force in order to be the kind of people, the whole people that we need to be.

Speaker 17 (01:14:33):

So if there's a question in that, I'm just wondering what can we do to help liberate wi women and not perpetuate violence since we talking so much about nonviolence.

Speaker 4 (01:14:44):

Okay. Very good. All right. We going, we got, oh, I'm sorry. GI <laugh> I'm I promise you you'll get your question. Cause GI has an, but let's go right on down. Yeah. Going have the last question. Make sure let's do this very quickly. Okay. And you don't have to give us the introduction. Just give us the question. That'd be good. Somebody in the front. It okay.

Speaker 17 (01:15:07):

I'll

Speaker 18 (01:15:08):

Make it very simple. Yeah. Very simple. The question is, is when you've been talking about the black church, the examples of the black church have been the ministers, but I haven't heard anybody speak about black women in the black church. And the fact that we played, we carried the church on our backs. We raised the money. We taught the children. We made sure that the culture of spirituality was transmitted. So where do you place women within this conversation? On the black church?

Speaker 4 (01:15:37):

Yes. Okay, good.

Speaker 19 (01:15:40):

I, I rise to give honor to the work that you gentlemen have done. And particularly also to the young line in Winston, SM John Mendes there. Okay. My question is and name in the sixties. You

Speaker 4 (01:15:51):

Gotta give

Speaker 19 (01:15:52):

Your name. My name is Perry Crutchfield junior in the sixties. The question was the ballot or the bullet. No, no. Great social change has occurred without I will get to it. No social change has occurred in this country without the involvement of the church. So my question today is the pastor or the congregation. Why is the black church silent? Is it the pastor or is it the congregation?

Speaker 4 (01:16:20):

Okay. Moving that along. Thank you.

Speaker 19 (01:16:23):

Oh, good afternoon. Um, my name is John Price and I'll be very brief. Um, it was Dr. King who said that, um, 11:30 AM on a Sunday morning is probably the most segregated hour in America and 2010. Um, I still find that to be true, even though we have, um, we call this the age of Obama and I just wanted to know from you, do you find that problematic or not?

Speaker 20 (01:16:46):

My name is Peggy King Yorta and I'm from Englewood, New Jersey originally from Albany, Georgia. My question is, or the word is transformation and in any great movement, we're talking about always talking about transformation. So Mike, just a comment about that.

Speaker 4 (01:17:05):

Okay. Oh, y'all she said a handful for a long time. Okay.

Speaker 21 (01:17:09):

My name is Tara Mack and I had a question about the relationship between the way that SNCC is structured and the way that churches or most churches that I've seen are structured. You know, it seems to me that SNCC had a very democratic structure. It was not one person in the leadership with a collection of followers. I'm wanting to what extent and this, I think this relates to the question about the women that have been raised. To what extent do you think that S N's way of making decisions way of people within SNCC relating to each other informed or had any effect, if any, on, on the black churches that they worked to, that they worked with and to, to what ex, to what extent do you think this is an issue with churches that I'm familiar with? All have a very hierarchical structure minister at the top, maybe some layers, deacons, whoever else in between, and the church congregants are the followers. So how do we practice liberation within a structure like that? And what do you think could be if anything done about it?

Speaker 4 (01:18:06):

Okay. All right.

Speaker 22 (01:18:10):

Uh, my name is junior Williams from Newark New Jersey, uh, to follow up what she said. Uh, I find that in working with the churches and doing the kind of social justice work that we do, uh, the biggest problem is the authoritarian nature of the church. The pastor insists on being the alpha and the omega. So, uh, is, is that the kind of model that we can use for social justice? When the, when the objective that we seem to be trying to do here in this group here is to try to empower people from the, from, from below. Uh, finally what I find myself doing when I go to church is to, uh, appease my own spiritual needs, my individual needs, but I come away wanting the group solution. And if we all are continuing to want to just, or encourage to just be individuals, then we are always going to adjust assume that this's gonna be a small amount that gets squeezed out of the toothpaste. And the rest of us are gonna still be wallowing in misery.

Speaker 4 (01:19:23):

Okay. We run along. Yeah.

Speaker 23 (01:19:27):

The, uh, without the black church state wouldn't existed without

Speaker 24 (01:19:33):

The black church, the civil rights movement wouldn't existed without black women, the black church will not exist, will not.

Speaker 4 (01:19:42):

Yeah. Lawrence Lawrence

Speaker 24 (01:19:44):

Git. And if we simply understand that there's SNCC has never gotten into a church that the women didn't fight to get us in. Amen. Amen. Look at the history. There. There's no exception. So all I would say, but I wanna, I stand to trying to cut off an argument that I think will kill us. I do not believe that religious organizations should be the foundation for public education, because it is very clear. They cannot be funded by local government and will not be funded by federal government. We must separate religion from education. And I, I personally support Bob Moses in his fight for a constitutional con uh, amendment that forces the federal government to provide an adequate education. When equalization of schools was taken to the Supreme court, the court say, we'd love to do this, but the constitution does not provide you with the right to an education.

Speaker 4 (01:20:53):

Okay. Okay. Why don't we just take, uh, oh, we gonna one more question then we, we should have a minute to respond to this. Yeah, he has had for a while. Thank you. <laugh>

Speaker 25 (01:21:11):

And good afternoon, everyone. My name is Jonathan Lewis. I'm from Providence, Rhode Island. Um, it's an honor and a privilege to be here with y'all. And my question is, what are we waiting for the church for? What are we waiting for the church for? I'm I'm really, really serious. I see so many youth being killed on a regular basis. I see so many of them being locked up on a regular basis. I've heard many stories of the movement and how the church had to catch up with the community, cuz the community know where they wanted to go. And I'm asking for us not to wait any longer. I I'm really, I'm really, uh, I'm really emotional around this because I do a lot of work with youth who are really in pain. That's good. And we're here talking about stuff. That's this kid's dying right now. D Albert anybody know that name? It should be scarred in your memory that young man was beaten to death by two other black boys in public. And nobody did anything. They videotaped it. Oscar grant getting shot in the back, videotaped. This stuff is happening all the time. And what are we doing? I applaud you back there. We need to find a way to move forward. Y'all our youth are dying. I know we have a lot of important issues. I understand that tremendously,

Speaker 25 (01:22:24):

But what are we doing for the youth? We can't point at them and say the youth, they don't know nothing. They're a reflection of us, what we have become. And yes, we have the black church. We've had the black church look where we are today. Not taking any credit away from the black church and everything that it has done. I, I I'm saying this was as much love as I possess, but I am saying that we need to move. We need to do something now. Thank you. I don't have a question.

Speaker 4 (01:22:54):

That's all right. Yeah. Sound like a civil disobedience to me. Cause if he last question, if he doesn't have a license to preach, he could be arrested. <laugh> we gonna try to, uh, give some brief responses. We don't expect to respond to all these questions, but we wanted to get the

questions out because as I said earlier, sometime the question is more important than the response, but you've given us a lot to think about. And we appreciate that. Now, if any of you would like to respond to, uh, any of them, you can't respond to all

Speaker 2 (01:23:27):

Of them. Of course I say amen to the brother that we have an actual crisis of youth in this country. And I also second, the motion that the origin of political mobilization does not begin with the church historically. It did not. It, the church serves as a supportive unit for community action. The community needs to come together. We are facing epidemic. I believe that we are facing, uh, genocide. Anytime you have 60 and 70% of your black young men on a course towards prison, the community cannot remain viable. Genocide is aside is, is in its way. And so I would hope that, uh, that we would hear what this gentleman said from Rhode Island, that the church is the church. Of course we need to critique the church and that gets done within the go the governance and poli of each of the various denominations and churches. And so if you are part of churches and you are not pleased, then you need to become activists within your church to try to make the church be more responsive, but let's not use the church. The reason we talked so much about the churches, that was what this panel was all about. Uh, look at struggle and civil rights in relationship to the African American church. And that's what we tried to do.

Speaker 7 (01:25:09):

I deeply appreciate all of these questions and I wish that we had time to sit with this and talk it out. Uh, and uh, I do think that at the end of the day, culture itself is a critique of the church. If the culture is doing bad, it's the church is doing bad. <laugh> uh, and if your community is doing bad, I don't see how you can have a vibrant, healthy, beautiful church. And, uh, people going to jail, people are dying. Drugs has emerged. So I just wanna say that, I think there's so many parts of this, uh, brother chair. I'm wondering whether it' possible to take these wonderful questions and actually do some work on them, uh, and get it back to everybody up in here. Uh, I think this is a deadly serious question. You know, the whole question of, uh, the structure and authoritarianism and all of these questions

Speaker 4 (01:26:09):

And

Speaker 7 (01:26:09):

Women and women. Uh, all of these questions mm-hmm <affirmative> are very important. Uh, let me end with this little story. Uh, I pastor a relatively small church, actually, I'm a Copa with two sisters. Um, and, uh, we, we, um, worked with a lot of different issues. Uh, and one of 'em was with youth and gangs and, uh, this Latino gang, uh, they don't call himself a gang. They call himself a nation and I call 'em a nation because they call 'em themselves a nation, the police call them a gang. And, uh, we had, uh, beautiful work with them and they pulled together Crips and bloods and peace stone nation. We all met in the basement of Genesis church and, uh, and pour something together, a little piece of understanding, uh, and the police just came down on them like nobody's business. And the leader of that group was shot.

Speaker 7 (01:27:06):

Uh, he didn't die. He gave me permission from his hospital bed to tell the people who shot him, that he forgave them. And that was a way to keep his guys from retaliating, which is what I think the police was trying to set up. Uh, and so, uh, they really kind of appreciate what we were doing and they all came to church, uh, on Sunday. And, uh, I, I was just ecstatic. Uh, uh, but then some church members came to me and said, Reverend, I just don't know about these gangs coming up in here. If they shot him, the other gang might come in and shoot us. Uh, and the question is, right, then you, you face a real decision. You know, you love the people in the choir and they standing up saying, thinking, they're gonna get shot. And yet, uh, uh, what are you going to do when people stagger in off the street, because they smell a little love and think that this is the

place that they belong and your congregation is getting ready to put them out. We had to have a church meeting <laugh> and we had to talk about what it is that Jesus would do under these circumstances. Uh, and, and I think it gets to that. And a lot of, and I, I just wish we had more time to talk this out because these are very important discussions, uh, that deserve, uh, more than what we are able to do right now.

Speaker 4 (01:28:37):

Let's thank these, uh, gentlemen for such a,

Speaker 2 (01:28:46):

And we thank you all for us. Yes, absolutely. The

Speaker 4 (01:28:49):

Engagement. Thank you. And being a Baptist preacher, I'm very, uh, short, I don't speak over two hours at one time. <laugh> so I wanna say, see you later.

Speaker 26 (01:29:02):

Pleasure. Thank you. Yeah. Thank you.