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**TRANSFORMED TO BE TRANSFORMERS:
BECOMING A TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE CHURCH**

**A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

BY

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to those poor in spirit, the least, the lost, the disinherited, and all those with the hope of a more abundant life.

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PREFACE

The Holy Bible does not specifically prescribe an economic system, but it speaks volumes with reference to economic principles, stewardship, and charity. Scripture is instructive when it comes to giving and sharing of our gifts. The Bible champions and inspires compassion and justice. It is also instructive in the raising of funds for the building of God's Kingdom on earth. We are to care for the poor, heal the sick, clothe the naked, give shelter to those exposed to the elements, and provide sustenance to those that hunger. Believers and followers of Jesus the Christ must not exclusively entrust the government with carrying out these responsibilities. The church is best positioned to be the initiator of positive transformation of individuals and society. Our reasonable sacrifice must be done with equity, dignity, and humanity. The challenge is to create wealth without falling victim to selfish greed.

CHAPTER ONE:

OVERVIEW

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”¹ (Matthew 6:9)

What we call The Lord’s Prayer is Jesus’ attempt to teach the disciples how to pray and what to pray for, and – I believe – to direct their focus to what was most important at the time. What was most important at the time was for Jesus to fulfill His God-given purpose. Because of Jesus’ work of faith on the cross, God’s Kingdom has come to the earth. In several parables, Jesus described what the Kingdom of God is like: the Kingdom of God is like a hidden treasure,² a fine pearl,³ a mustard seed,⁴ a garden that has been overrun with weeds,⁵ yeast,⁶ and a net filled with fish.⁷ Each parable depicts the Kingdom of God here on earth prior to Advent, or the second coming of Jesus.

According to Scripture, a seed does not choose the soil in which it is sown. We can, however, choose what type of soil we will be. Seed that is sown to the Spirit reaps a harvest of blessings. Seed that is sown to the flesh risks destruction. We can only bear fruit from the type of seed that is sown, good or bad. God is waiting to see the fruit that we will produce through our lives – lives that God has given us.

The Kingdom of God, like the mustard seed, started small, has grown, and continues a gradual growth still today. Like yeast that is added to dough, at first the Kingdom may be unnoticeable. Yet, as a small amount of yeast will eventually cause the dough to rise, so similarly the Kingdom of God will continue to rise. Just as the merchant that looked for fine pearls and sold everything to attain them, that is how we should sell

out for the Kingdom of God. No earthly riches, silver, or gold, can compare to the great treasure of God's Kingdom. Then too, perhaps we are the treasure, God's precious pearls, and God was willing to give everything, even His Only Begotten Son, to redeem us unto Himself.

In the end to come, the Kingdom of God will be like fishing net filled with good and bad fish, or a garden with produce and weeds. All of us must coexist now, but each of us must choose whom we will serve. Eventually, the time will come when the good and bad fish will be separated, as will the wheat from the tare, and the sheep from the goats. This is how God intends His Kingdom to unfold on earth. What then is our purpose and what will we do, before that day when the good is set apart from the bad?

Faith in Jesus the Christ has caused ordinary men to turn the world upside down. According to one perspective, perhaps those men were turning the world right side up. However, this is how Paul and Silas were described in Thessalonica: "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."⁸ Jesus called ordinary men, including uneducated fishermen, political outsiders and religious outcasts, to be his disciples. Within three short years, Jesus transformed these ordinary men into people who were able to fulfill His extraordinary purpose. These men became powerful men of God who indeed "turned the world upside down." Acts 4:13 has this to say about some of these men: "The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with

Jesus.”⁹ What will be said of us, who also are called to be disciples of Jesus? How are we doing with “turning the world upside down”?

In many mainline churches, traditional methods for funding transformative mercy and/or sustaining ministries are failing. Church operations have become a vicious cycle of “collect and spend.” Consequently, churches tend to pursue more affluent members at the expense and to the detriment of those who need the church most. Many individuals are struggling through life, with their backs against the walls, and are in need of hope. The paradigm of the church, as we know it, is now seriously in question. In light of this phenomenon and in response thereto, a new church plant in Anne Arundel County, Agape Deliverance Ministries, Inc., is seeking new and innovative methods for funding transformative, sustaining, and impactful ministries and missions.

As I undertook the establishment of the new church plant Agape Deliverance Ministries, Inc., I also interviewed ministry leaders and visited ministries that have successfully employed alternative methods for doing and funding ministry. In the following pages I will document and analyze effective church plant processes, the implementation of alternative ministry, and its funding methods, such as Ecclesiastical Entrepreneurism, Business as Mission (BAM), Community Development Corporations (CDC), Federal Grants, and other viable funding solutions.

CHAPTER TWO:

REIMAGINING THE CHURCH PARADIGM

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”¹⁰ (Matthew 6:10)

Our God is a God of transformation. As such, so should the church of God be transformational. It is only when the church stays focused on God that the lives, values, and the outlook of its members and its community may begin to rise above worldly perspectives. The church must be in partnership with its community, as well as being an initiator and forerunner of the solutions that impact its community. But that is not what we see if we stop and take a look at churches in our communities. I have come to question more and more the paradigm of the church and church building. Perhaps the church building paradigm commonly seen in America’s churches has run its course? Can the church be the catalyst for the transformation of individuals and communities in this day and age? Does the church have what it takes to be a champion of change? Can the church today be taken seriously when it professes to speak truth to power?

Before I proceed to examine these questions, it may be fruitful to first explain my ministry background and experiences. I am coming out of a most unique worship environment. I am a licensed and ordained Baptist minister, although I have never been a military chaplain, as a retired United States Marine, I served as the Minister of Worship for Argonne Hills Gospel Service (AHGS), in Fort Meade, MD. A non-denominational ministry, AHGS has been in existence for approximately forty years as a chaplaincy ministry of the United States Army. Because AHGS meets in a military chapel on the

Fort George G. Meade Military Installation, it is subject to the rules and regulations of the chaplaincy. AHGS primarily consists of retired military personnel from all branches of the services (Army, Navy, Air Forces, Marines, and Coast Guard) and their family members. Some active duty personnel also attend.

One catalyst for seeking to develop a new ministry is that I have grown concerned about the restrictions and limitations that challenge churches that utilize government facilities. I often wonder if we could be more effective outside of the fortress walls. Whom are the walls protecting? Are they keeping us in or are they keeping others out? As I have grown in ministry, I have begun to ask, “How do we breach these walls within our walls, as well as the walls outside of our walls, with a truly transformative ministry that engages community service, community organizing, and community development?”

As I pondered these questions and sought answers to them, I have found that I truly relate to Ray Bakke. In his book, *A Theology as Big as the City*, Bakke observes,

It is God’s kingdom agenda that seeks the salvation of all persons and the social transformation of all places. Churches are both signs of and a witness to God’s creative and redemptive agendas. We need the urban evangelist, the pastor and urban community developer as partners. None should assume their calling more spiritual or more significant than the other. Every gift belongs in the urban mission of the church.¹¹

This is my vision and mission for Agape Deliverance Ministries, Inc. I seek to be as Bakke puts it, a “pastor to the faithful and chaplain to the whole community.”¹²

The very nature of a military installation is to delineate, separate, and discern persons to be given authorized access. Similarly, a place of worship has its own self-imposed boundaries, such as denominations, race, targeted age groups, social status, etc. Another challenge facing places of worship in military facilities is the boundaries put in

place by military rules and regulations. One such regulation is United States Army (USA) Regulation (AR) 165-1 Army Chaplain Corps Regulations for the Conduct of Religious Activities. According to AR 165-1, the first and foremost responsibility of the chaplaincy is to active duty soldiers, their families, retirees, Department of Defense (DoD) civilians, and other authorized personnel. Religious support rendered by the chaplaincy is based on three major principles: Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Dead. Therefore, individuals outside of these parameters are not lawfully authorized to partake of or participate in the religious offerings or funds of the chaplaincy. However, for a church to be one that transforms lives, homes, communities, and cities, it must have access to those people and provide them with equal access to itself.

On the installation in Fort Meade, there are even protocols that govern the contacting of families that live there. To be fair, there is a general restriction on any type of solicitation within the housing areas. Unfortunately, these protocols affect and limit the ability of ministries to reach out to those residing on the installation, where there could very well be families and/or individuals hurting and in need of a spiritual encounter. However, when it comes to supporting the active duty troops, ministries are allowed to adopt an on-base command tenant, such as the 902nd Intelligence Battalion. In that context, AHGS provides active duty troops an annual prayer luncheon and sends care packages to those deployed to places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Interestingly, and perhaps as a consequence of limitations from military regulations, AHGS has become much more directly involved with the community off the base, although not always in the name of the chapel. We have partnered with a local church to provide support for its food pantry. The partnership allows us to much more

directly refer needy families to the food pantry for vital support. We also have partnered with a hospital for the criminally insane to provide chaplaincy services, church services, and weekly bible study. AHGS also has partnered with two elder care facilities to provide church services, choir visits, as well as to contribute essential supplies such as toiletries and socks. In Baltimore City, we sponsor coat drives for an inner city shelter for the homeless.

Besides the limitations facing ministries that operate on military bases, even in the civilian world there are other reasons why the church should reconsider its paradigm. Perhaps first among many reasons is the phenomenon of dwindling congregations, which has diluted and challenged the church's effectiveness. All across the nation, congregations have been shrinking over the years for various reasons. One aspect for the loss of congregants is the gentrification of communities. With more and more congregants leaving its doors, many churches are finding it difficult to collect enough funding to sustain a ministry that makes a difference. This situation is also exacerbated by the ongoing downturn of our economy. Many individuals are out of work and are facing financial difficulties. Smaller congregation size and higher number of churchgoers who struggle financially have together resulted in the decreasing amount of operational funds collected through tithes and offerings, making it hard for churches to survive, let alone thrive.

As a result of this struggle, the financial operation of some churches has become a vicious cycle. Naturally, a church requires tithes and offerings to be able to sustain itself and its operations. However, if the church catered only to the needy – who are often less well-off financially, take up church resources, and cannot contribute substantially – it

may not be able to gather enough funds to meet the needs of the needy or the needs of the church. Therefore, churches often overlook the needy while pursuing the more affluent. How can a church be the catalyst for transformation, when it has little to no means of supporting – much less transforming – itself? Perhaps it is time to do church in a new way, one that is more innovative, productive, profitable, efficient and effective.

Another factor of church decline is that young adults have been leaving the church at a concerning rate. An illuminating opinion article on the CNN International Belief Blog sheds light on why millennials are leaving the church. Entitled, “*Why Millennials are Leaving the Church*,” the article was authored by Rachel Held Evans, who also wrote *Evolving in Monkey Town* and *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*. Evans drew from surveys and personal testimonies and surmised that millennials are turning from evangelical Christianity because Christianity is “too political, too exclusive, old-fashioned, unconcerned with social justice and hostile to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.”¹³ These young adults, in their twenties or thirties, feel that they have to “choose between their intellectual integrity and their faith, between science and Christianity, between compassion and holiness.”¹⁴ Evans posited that millennials are not seeking a change in style, but are leaving the church out of their repulsion with “church-as-performance.” Millennials declare, “We want an end to the culture wars. We want a truce between science and faith. We want to be known for what we stand for, not what we are against. We want to ask questions that don’t have predetermined answers. We want churches that emphasize an allegiance to the kingdom of God over an allegiance to a single political party or a single nation. We want our LGBT friends to feel truly welcome in our faith communities. We want to be challenged to live lives of holiness, not

only when it comes to sex, but also when it comes to living simply, caring for the poor and oppressed, pursuing reconciliation, engaging in creation care and becoming peacemakers.”¹⁵ These concerns must be addressed when the church considers a paradigm shift in its ministry goals and methods.

The paradigm of the “church house” must also be reconsidered. What is an effective use of church facilities? Many church buildings today sit idle throughout the week, with most of their activities scheduled on Sundays or Saturdays, and at most one or two evenings during the week. Our church facilities could be very beneficial to the community and profitable if we maximized the use of the space. Church space can be utilized for community education, adult training, youth mentoring, community support, and even for-profit activities. The question is, how far from the maximal use are most churches?

Equally alarming is the lack of vision of individuals and institutions, as lamented by Eldin Villafane in his book, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*. Villafane notes, “Individuals and institutions—including the church—that are to model and live out a vision are themselves visionless. A vision, whether we apply it to an individual or an institution, gives direction, focuses energies, informs content, and character, and sets the framework for ‘seeing’ and ‘valuing’ life’s true meaning and goals. It shapes the image of self and world.”¹⁶ This view, focusing on intentional visions and dubbed “The Jeremiah Paradigm for the City,” is consistent with Proverbs 29:18, “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”¹⁷ Villafane offers that the role of the church and God’s people in the city today “is an overarching, wholistic vision for the city, one that can inspire our work in urban

ministry....”¹⁸ Villafane derives the Jeremiah Paradigm from a theological context of mission and a theology of spirituality that corresponds to presence, peace, and prayer.

Presence, peace, and prayer would make very powerful contributions to a wholistic ministry. I envision a wholistic ministry to be one that seeks to address all aspects of the human condition, including health, education, spirituality, politics, and economics, to name a few. However, instead of using the term, “wholistic ministry,” I prefer “wholeness ministry.” A wholeness ministry seeks to care for the body, the mind, and the soul of every individual – the whole person. As such, the gift of presence is a very powerful and invaluable one to share with those that are suffering pain, distress, loneliness, or hardship. We all have experienced some form of suffering. As such, the gift of presence is a gift to the suffering and an act of service that forces us to reach outside of ourselves and relate to those in the midst of suffering.

Allow me to insert an interlude here and share how I came to know the power of presence. Some years back a friend of a friend lost her son, who was only about six years old. Our mutual friend asked me to talk with her, and so I did. Sharing with her from the standpoint of God’s truth, “thus said the Lord,” I told her what the Scripture says about her situation. However, that was not what she needed at the time, as I realized years later. What she needed was my presence. She needed someone to talk to – not about theology or heroes of the faith, but just to share and verbalize her pain. She needed the presence of a loving and caring individual, perhaps someone with the Spirit of Jesus the Christ. She needed to be administered the love and compassion of our faith, not to be preached to or proselytized. She needed someone to at least try to hear and understand what she was saying and feeling. Rather than offering solutions or “fixing” her, I needed to simply be

there for her. I should have offered her godly compassion, or in other words, to suffer with her, or to share in her suffering.

After “presence” is peace in a wholeness ministry. Just as Villafane’s writing resonated with me, I too relate to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s statement that “true peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice.”¹⁹ Also speaking about peace and its relationship to justice, Luke Bretherton suggests in his *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity*, “...justice is what the strong make it. [It] is capitalist corporations and the bureaucracies of the nation-state that are strong. Thus, it is capitalist corporations and the bureaucracies of the nation-state that determine what counts as justice.”²⁰ Bretherton goes on to admonish the believers: “The church should be an instrument, a servant of peace in the city. It preaches and lives out the Shalom of God.”²¹ Villafane also offers a definition of *shalom*, as speaking of wholeness, soundness, completeness, health, harmony, reconciliation, justice, and welfare—both personal and social.²² In order to seek true peace and justice on behalf of our communities, the church must push back on self-serving organizations that subvert and corrupt the laws that were put in place for the common good.

To achieve true peace, our justice system also must be revamped. The position of greatest power in our justice system and, consequently in the whole of United States, is the office of the prosecutor. The prosecutor’s absolute power of discretion as to what charges to bring and against whom to bring those charges, accounts for most of the disparity when it comes to those who inhabit our prisons. Police officers have similar power in their discretion of whom to ticket or whom to arrest. There is no redress for a prosecutor’s prosecutorial decisions. A system of review must be considered for how

those decisions are determined and how grand jury proceedings are conducted. The church should join forces with those who advocate for these justice reforms as a way to secure real peace – the presence of justice – in our society.

Finally, in the three-pronged approach of a wholeness ministry is prayer. I believe our prayers convey our gratitude and place our petitions before God. As our divine communications with God, prayer is accompanied and enhanced by faith, worship, confession, adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. Prayer not only affects our own lives, but through our intercession, it can also help make a difference in the lives of others.

In various ways described above, I have found that presence, peace, and prayer are essential to a wholeness ministry. “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me!”²³ This parable encapsulates this new wholeness ministry's focus to serve those in need. To that end, the ministry will seek to encompass a missional aspect, in which the worship service must no longer be the exclusive space for connecting people to God. I am using the word “missional” here not in the sense of someone going to foreign lands to evangelize, but of someone's intention of becoming a functioning member of and a partner with the local community. Sadly, we need missions work right here in America, a nation that professes to be the greatest on the face of the earth.

The church must be seen as being a member of the community as it develops its wholeness ministry. In essence, I hope to make the entirety of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, the extended congregation of the new church plant, Agape Deliverance Ministries. I want to take the Word of God into the community through action, in both

word and deed. More than a missions program, I seek to build a missional church that makes its focus to fulfill our call to God's mission in redeeming individuals, communities, and the world. Addressing this missional call to reach the community, Villafane explains that the "dynamic and dialectical spirituality social context" is "a social context that deeply needs both contemplative and apostolic activity." He further reminds his reader: "The brokenness of society (so visible in the barrios and ghettos of our cities) the scriptural missional mandate, and the Spirit's love constrain us to feed the hungry, visit the sick and prisoners, shelter the homeless and poor—to express God's love in social concerns. We do this as an expression of faithful obedience and authentic spirituality."²⁴

Despair and hopelessness are real and pervasive in our society today. Individuals and entire communities are hurting and struggling to make it. I have maintained a prison ministry for over eight years now, and I will also lead my congregation in visiting an elder care facility once a month. We will continue to serve those sick and shut in, and let them know that they are not forgotten. God's love can still reach them. In response to the suffering in our communities and as Christians, we must take on the mission statement of Jesus, as prophesied by Isaiah and proclaimed by Jesus Himself:

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, ¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.²⁵

Not only must we make Jesus' mission our mission, we need to also pursue and build such ministries with a "burning patience" because of the difficulties that will surely come our way. In Villafane's words, this kind of patience "is that quality of faith which permits

one to live in the ‘now and not yet,’ to live in the tension of the age to come and the present age. It is the quality of faith that gives meaning and strength to our present endeavors—to our present ministry.”²⁶ Although in life, we will face trials, tribulations, and failures, we can still have a vision of a wonderful city filled with peace. “We have hope, we can be patient. We have a “burning patience.”²⁷

Within the vision of creating a new church paradigm, I see the church as being obligated to the advancement of the arts. The church is uniquely positioned to provide a place and space for artistic expression. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) research report, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies*, provided evidence that arts education has the potential to provide valuable benefits for our youth. The research even showed measurable benefits of arts for at-risk youth and youths of low economical status. “At-risk students who have access to the arts in or out of school also tend to have better academic results, better workforce opportunities, and more civic engagement.”²⁸ These benefits were derived from “coursework in music, dance, theater, or the visual arts; out-of-school arts lessons; or membership, participation, and leadership in arts organizations and activities, such as band or theater.”²⁹ Our government has been steadily cutting funding for these valuable endeavors – endeavors that have the ability to inspire creativity, healing, and hope. I believe that the arts can inspire the physically handicapped, the emotionally downtrodden, the mentally challenged, as well as the spiritually lost.

A particularly thorough exposition on our culture and the arts can be found in *Creating Ourselves: African Americans and Hispanic American on Popular Culture and Religious Expression*, as edited by Anthony B. Pinn and Benjamin Valentin. As well, in

her Response to the Essay by Suzanne E. Hoeferkamp Segovia, Sheila F. Winborne reminds us, “Significant parts of our cultures and faith beliefs are passed on from generation to generation through the visual arts. It is important that communities that historically have been oppressed participate in communicating the truths of personal and communal histories in ways that may inspire and communicate to current and future generations their diversity of experiences.”³⁰

In addition to retelling our history to the next generations through the arts, we need new writers and new literature to document the stories that are being lived out in this current age. James H. Evans, Jr. said in his book, *This Day In Paradise: The Search for Human Fulfillment in Toni Morrison’s Paradise*, “Some of the most powerful, substantive, and enduring notions of human fulfillment in the United States experience over the last two centuries have come out of the African American context. The most poignant expressions of hope have, ironically, come from persons whose situations have been most hopeless.”³¹ Within urban communities, I can only imagine the treasure trove of poignant expression and experiences that are not being recorded for posterity that could enrich many generations to come. We have to find a way to inspire and harness this untapped spiritual treasure, which has been largely overlooked like a vast field of sweet flowers whose nectar has gone untouched by the bees. This precious nectar holds the ingredients for producing the next generation of sweet flowers. The world suffers from this great loss.

In my experience serving at AHGS and founding Agape Deliverance Ministries, my greatest challenge has been raising the funds necessary to maintain the ministry, a figure that often exceeds the congregation’s tithes and offerings. If obtained, these funds

would enable and empower our optimistic and transcending vision. To acquire such funds, many churches perhaps would opt for government assistance. However, as stated above, my ministry experiences at Fort Meade resulted in some tension I feel about installing the church within a government facility and thereby subjecting it to the directions and mandates of the government. Generally I have a favorable view of the separation of church and state, though I have not completely resolved my inner conflict towards government-funded Faith-based Initiatives and grants. However, to ensure the autonomy of the church, the separation of the church and state must be preserved and safeguarded. I believe governmental influence, incursion, intrusion into, and/or endorsement of any one religion over another would be detrimental to the free exercise of all faith organizations.

Instituted by former President George W. Bush in January of 2001, by executive order, the Faith-based Initiative did not receive the national scrutiny and debate that I feel it should have garnered. My concern for government advances into religious practices and funding is equaled by my concern with churches proselytizing with government and/or taxpayer funding. Also concerning is the possibility of the institutionalization of discrimination based on faith. As we have seen recently, several state legislative bills across the country have been introduced that were based on discrimination according to one's faith and beliefs. Thankfully, most have failed thus far.

President Obama has continued the Faith-based Initiative under a program called the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The Obama administration has also tried to implement some constitutional safeguards. However, I question whether the equitable distribution of funds can be accomplished. Are all faith

organizations equally eligible? Are atheist organizations eligible? Finally, I fear that competition for funding may cause division within the Body of Christ. I also worry that the desire of government approval and the addicting effect of money may make it tempting to make compromises for those that are obligated to speak truth to power.

Luke Bretherton seems to echo a similar sentiment in his book *Christianity & Contemporary Politics*. He stated,

After experiencing many years of being marginalized by the state when it came to the formulation of public policy and the distribution of public funds, a new openness on the part of the state to work with churches can appear a welcome development. However, close analysis of the impact of partnership with the state, under present conditions, suggests that the church should be cautious about receiving money from the state.³²

Moving forward, the church must be discriminating and exercise thoughtful discernment with its interactions with the government. If the church chooses to enter into a partnership with the state, it must remain vigilant in order to avoid being coopted or misused, thereby subsequently losing its voice.

How do we get there from here? I believe that the church, outside of worship, must become more business-minded, in order to bring in more funds for operations and benevolence. These funds will enable the church to support the needy in much greater ways. Rather than have a building dedicated exclusively for worship, perhaps the building can be for-profit while preserving the worship part of the church non-profit. The facility can and should offer many types of services that can bring in revenue, such as banquets, plays, concerts, conferences, meeting space, event planning, educational training, franchising, etc. The worship side of the church can rent space from the business side of the church. In other words, in order to survive and be more effective in the

community, the church is going to have to think far outside the paradigm it now finds itself in.

Here is an example in microcosm. Limited by military and federal restrictions on engaging outside communities with government funds (i.e., tithes and offerings), I created a ministry within the chapel environment, which operates under a separate 501(c)(3) while outside of its jurisdiction. The nucleus of the ministry is the Charles Cedric (C. C.) Carroll Male Chorus. When we embark upon missions work, we are known as “Men on a Mission.” We organize annual crab feasts, teas, and other fundraisers to secure funds for the purpose of providing outreach to our original home churches. We are composed of military retirees from all over the country. The male chorus would then travel to these home churches, one church each year, to perform a concert and present them with funds in support of the church’s designated project. We don’t perform for pay; we bless others with a performance and by supporting their projects monetarily. This is the type of thinking we need, as the church, as we move forward to truly be transformational.

Finally, in changing the paradigm of the church, my thoughts are on the church speaking truth to power. We can’t fight an enemy if we don’t know who our actual enemy is. Ephesians 6:12 states, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”³³ I like how author Walter Wink explains it in his book, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*. He asserts that everything has a spirit, whether it’s a man, organization, institution, or world system. These entities take on their own spirit. Everything in the world starts out good,

suffers a fallen state, and needs to be redeemed by God. Wink goes on to say that we must challenge these institutions to live up to the vocation they were created for. We can oppose their actions, while honoring their necessity. These systems must be honored, criticized, resisted, and redeemed.³⁴

Wink's solution is that we must fight power with power. We must fight the power of evil with the power of good, the power of greed with the power of selflessness, the power of violence with the power of non-violence, the power of darkness with the power of light, and the power of hate with the power of love. In the same vein, Dr. King said, "Somewhere somebody must have some sense. Men must see that force begets force, hate begets hate, toughness begets toughness. And it is all a descending spiral, ultimately ending in destruction for all and everybody. Somebody must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and the chain of evil in the universe. And you do that by love."³⁵

Agape Deliverance Ministries, Inc., would be a wholeness minisrty, with a theological homiletic of proclamation and testimony. This wholeness paradigm would include pastoral care, hospice care, and care for returning citizens. Returning citizens are those formerly imprisoned who have paid their debt to society and are returning to community. Such a program is known as restorative justice, restoring those citizens to communal life with care and love. We want to be a model of caring, not just proselytizing. To provide comprehensive care to the community, this will be a ministry of presence, visiting those sick and shut in; and a ministry of justice that addresses the policy and actions of the county, state, and federal leaders.

There is a dire need to change the paradigm of church and the church building from its social leanings to be more transformative. Not only should the church be concerned with one's salvation, but it must also be concerned with the reconciliation of the people and the redemption of our communities. The church must be the catalyst and lead the charge in fighting power with power. The fight must be done with and through love for all mankind, not by division and violence.

What Dr. King says in one of his sermons, entitled "Conformed Nonconformists," eloquently captures the central reason why the church needs a new paradigm:

Gradually, however, the church became so entrenched in wealth and prestige that it began to dilute the strong demands of the gospel and to conform to the ways of the world. And ever since the church has been a weak and ineffectual trumpet making uncertain sounds. If the church of Jesus Christ is to regain once more its power, message, and authentic ring, it must conform only to the demands of the gospel.³⁶

In another sermon, "Loving Your Enemies," King encourages us,

By engaging one another with love, we can cripple racial bias; destroy economic exploitation; eradicate educational inequities, and illuminate social alienation. By this, we can push mankind closer to providing to all access to the physical and spiritual necessities of life. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. We are dependent each upon the other. We are surely going to have to learn to live together or we're destined to perish together.³⁷

King's words echo those in Galatians 5:15, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."³⁸

Jesus gave us only two commandments, both based in love: Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and love your neighbor as yourself.³⁹ Here is the power of these two commandments—if we would strive to fulfill these two, we will ultimately fulfill the entire Law of Moses. If I truly loved God, I wouldn't worship idols or other

gods. Nor would I use God's name in vain. If I truly loved you, I wouldn't kill you. If I truly loved you, I wouldn't steal from you. If I truly loved you, I wouldn't covet what's yours, or seek to do you any harm. Our weapons to induce transformation must be faith, prayer, hope, and love. 1 Corinthians 13:13 summarizes this, "Three things will last forever--faith, hope, and love--and the greatest of these is love."⁴⁰ So let us eagerly desire the greater gifts, but pursue the more excellent way—the way of love.⁴¹

CHAPTER THREE:

GETTING HERE FROM THERE

“Give us this day our daily bread.”⁴² (Matthew 6:11 KJV)

I have come to the call of urban ministry through somewhat of a circuitous route. I was born in Mendenhall, MS, the county seat of Simpson County in central Mississippi. Through my entire youth and young adult life, my family and I attended a rural Baptist church. The state capital of Jackson was the largest metropolitan area I knew, and I also became exposed to urban life through my travels with the United States Marine Corps.

As a result of these experiences, I identify easily with Ray Bakke and his book, *A Theology as Big as the City*. Bakke recounts, “Even not forty years after first arriving in Chicago as a student, I am surprised that God would call me, the child of loggers and farmers, to ministry service in the largest cities of the world.”⁴³ I am as surprised as Bakke by such a grand calling. I, the son of a sharecropper, a lumberyard worker, a domestic and a nursing home worker, now sit on the precipice of such a high calling. Bakke’s goal was to describe his personal quest to find a theology “as big as the city.”⁴⁴ The steps that God has ordered for me also have launched me on a journey to find a theology that encompasses the city, the country, and the world.

Bakke listed several challenges that are before those of us in urban ministries, such as the urban challenge, the challenge of numbers, the challenge of migration, the challenge of church structure, and the challenge of funding.⁴⁵ In my endeavor to found a new ministry and new types of funding vehicles, I have been presented with a great

challenge indeed. Despair and hopelessness is pervasive in both the rural areas of the country as well as the city. The funding requirement alone to operate churches and/or develop communities is daunting. Bakke observes very well the tension “between the need to spiritually transform persons and the need to socially transform places.”⁴⁶ Bakke came to his theology, as he puts it, out of the overflow of grace that God had bestowed upon him. This speaks to my heart – I don’t seek this challenge out of my own desire, but I accept this challenge out of the gratitude that I have for all that God has done for me.

I was born in the late 1950s. The 1960s were racially and politically tumultuous, especially in Mississippi. The civil rights struggle played a very prominent role in my life and development. I had the unfortunate experience to taste, first hand, the sting of racism and oppression. I witnessed the shame of having to enter the rear of establishments, just for the privilege of giving the proprietor my money. I knew all too well the indignity of separate and the immorally unequal. Separate fountains, separate restrooms, separate churches, and separate schools were the norm and the law. I suffered institutionalized injustice, not so subtly perpetrated by law enforcement personnel who had sworn to protect and serve – protect and serve whom exactly?

Fortunately, I still knew a faithful God. Growing up in a faith-oriented family, I was guided by my praying parents to seek a life of righteousness, integrity, and self-discipline. At the age of six, a visiting preacher stopped me, and suddenly grabbed me by the back of my head. He said, “Boy, your head is made like a preacher’s head.” That was the first seed planted with reference to the possibility of a call upon my life by God. It was also that same year, at the tender age of six, that I accepted Jesus the Christ as my

Lord and Savior. I was baptized at Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Braxton, Mississippi.

As far back as my baptism, I have felt a tremendous call upon my life. As I look back, I can truly see that the Lord has been nurturing me, guiding me, protecting me, edifying me, equipping me, and leading me to carry the gospel message and care for His sheep. I know that I have been called, for it feels as though a portion of the weight of all of humanity is my very own burden to bear. The compassion that I have for my fellowmen and my passion to do God's will compel me to speak God's Word and to sing His Praise. While others are pursuing missionary work in far-off lands, I think missions are vitally needed in our urban centers here in America. That is not to discount the importance of and the tremendous work that is being carried out around the world. However, some of our urban centers are not unlike third-world countries in their needs and their lack. In the words of psalmist Charles Wesley, "A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify."⁴⁷ I can do none other!

I was educated in the Mississippi public schools and I am a 1977 graduate of Mendenhall Attendance Center. From there I went on to attend Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi, majoring in Computer Science and Criminal Justice, before joining the United States Marine Corps (USMC) in January 1981. During a 20-year USMC career, I traveled and saw the world outside of Mississippi. I experienced and interacted with diverse people groups and cultures in various places. As fate would have it, I found myself a long way from Mendenhall physically, spiritually, psychologically, and philosophically.

God has seen fit to prosper a sharecropper's son educationally and socially. I list below my achievements, not as a statement of pride, but as an example of what God can do and has done. Only God could have taken me from such humble beginnings to where I am today. Without God's protection and if God had not ordered my steps, I can't even imagine what my life would be like. I highlight this only to show that God is not limited by our shortcomings, God is limited by our faith. We should not live by what we see, we must live by what we believe! The following tables display my educational and military achievements, respectively. I am also still serving my country as a government System Design Engineer contractor and Information Systems and Security Engineer with The Van Dyke Technology Group (VDTG), in support of our national security.

Degree	School	Location	Date Granted
High School Diploma	Mendenhall Attendance Center	Mendenhall, MS	May 1977
Associate of Science (AS) General Studies	University of New York, Regents (Now Excelsior University)	Albany, NY	May 1990
Bachelor of Science (BS) Sociology	University of New York, Regents (Now Excelsior University)	Albany, NY	May 1995
Master of Science (MS) Information & Telecommunications Systems Management	Capitol College (Now Capitol Technology University)	Laurel, MD	May 2000
Master of Divinity (MDiv)	Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD)	Washington, DC	May 2007
Graduate Certificate Security Engineering	George Washington University (GWU)	Washington, DC	January 2010
Doctor of Ministry (DMin)	Wesley Theological Seminary (WTS)	Washington, DC	May 2015

TABLE 1. Educational Accomplishments

United States Marine Corps (USMC) Awards/Medals
Defense Meritorious Service Medal
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medals (2)
Joint Service Achievement Medal
Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal
National Defense Service Medal
Kuwait Liberation Medal
Southwest Asia Service Medal
Navy Marine Corps Overseas Ribbon (3)
Humanitarian Service Medal

TABLE 2. Military Medals & Awards

In January 2002 I answered the call to the ministry and was licensed and ordained by the Reverend Dr. A. C. D. Vaughn, Senior Pastor of Sharon Baptist Church, in Baltimore, MD. As a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Wesley Theological Seminary, I have found my life coming full circle. The reason I chose to attend Wesley was to participate in the Urban Ministry Track of the Doctor of Ministry Program with its emphasis on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Beloved Community.

Interestingly enough, during our cohort, we have used several books that focus on the Reverend Dr. John Perkins and his ministries. Mendenhall, MS, is also the city where Perkins founded Voice of Calvary Ministries. Dr. Perkins is recognized as one of the pioneers of urban ministry. As a youth, I found Voice of Calvary to be instrumental in my growth and my awareness of the world around me. Dr. Perkins' ministry and his activism had a profound impact upon my life. I remember him leading the civil rights marches for equality, and the protests against business owners, in an effort to move the businesses to hire blacks. One particular night remains vivid in my memory. It was the night Dr.

Perkins spent in the Rankin County jail in Brandon, MS. It was one of the scariest nights of my life, second only to the night Hurricane Camille ravaged Mississippi in the summer of 1969.⁴⁸

As described in Charles Marsh's *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice from the Civil Rights Movement to Today*, Perkins was brutalized nearly to death at the hands of the Rankin County Sheriff Deputies. Upon hearing that Perkins was being detained, the community held a prayer vigil for his safety through the night. The reputation and modis operandi of the Rankin County Sheriff's Department was well known. Perkins was actually lured to Brandon, Mississippi, by the arrest earlier that day of several students, most of them white, that were supporting the business boycott in Mendenhall. When Perkins sought their release, he was detained, beaten, and tortured.

The rumor and talk in the community included stories of Perkins being tortured with a fork was confirmed by Marsh. "One of the officers took a fork and shoved it into the minister's nose and after that twisted it down his throat. Then the men dragged Perkins into the middle of the room and attacked him again."⁴⁹ Perkins, by God's grace, survived the night of torture. To secure a bond for his release, the community banded together with monetary donations and with land owners putting up their land. Some even traveled to Brandon to protest on the square for Perkin's release.

Perkins gave credit to the civil rights movement in Mississippi for the growth of his social consciousness. "I think I was starting to see that just being merely a fundamentalist Bible-believing Christian, the 'Jesus-saves' only type, was not radical enough for the problems we are dealing with, and that people need training, they need skills, they need jobs—and sometimes," Perkins would add, "they even need a good dose

of righteous anger. A transformed mind without transformed social practices was worthless.”⁵⁰ In trying to understand the hate that his torturers displayed towards him, Perkins came to the realization that he could not proceed as a minister filled with hate. He, like all of us, was in need of forgiveness. “Forgiveness came for him the most liberating of all human activities, conditioned by a power that, once unleashed, enabled discernment and actions.”⁵¹ This sentiment echoes my own experiences growing up in a place with such blatant biases. It is life-changing and perhaps life-revolutionizing, when one has to learn to navigate the minefields of hate and racial bias. The simplest encounter can spiral out of control to a point where one’s very life may be on the line.

I recall my earliest encounter with a law enforcement official in Mississippi. I was around fifteen years old. A friend and I were at a convenience store and my friend simply spoke to one of his white female classmates. As we drove away from the store, we were stopped by a constable. A constable holds an office in a police department and normally serves civil summonses and arrest warrants for minor offenses, and appears in Justice Courts as bailiffs. The Office of Constable is an elected position within each of four districts of the State of Mississippi. The constable immediately asked, “Why were you talking to that white girl?” My friend stated that she was a classmate and he had simply spoken to her. The constable told us in no uncertain terms, “If I ever see you talking to a white girl again, I’m gonna plant you in the ground!” Afterwards, he sent us on our way.

I had the opportunity to see the constable again a few years later. Of course, he had no idea who I was. We actually ended up working together, side by side, at a wood pallet plant. At first, I had thoughts of hate and anger towards him. However, one day when I just stopped and took a look at the person, I saw a pathetic shell of a man without

his badge and gun. Without his badge and gun, he spoke in whispers and with timidity. I realized that he was more afraid of me than I was of him. All my hate and anger disappeared and we continued our work. Like Dr. Perkins, I came to realize that forgiveness is liberating. Forgiving others frees us up to live. Through faith and forgiveness, there is hope for a better day.

Events like these opened me up to hear the messages of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the same book, *The Beloved Community*, Marsh documented King's transformation from small church pastor to the leader of a movement of God that we call the civil rights movement.

King emerged from the Montgomery bombing with a single-minded theme, the transformative power of love. He began now to speak forthrightly of the "weapon of love," of "compassion and understanding for those who hate us," of "the truth of the real God."⁵²

King would risk his life on the proposition that "the immanence of agape" can be "concretely conceived in human nature and history," and that "the availability of the divine Agape is an essential affirmation of the Christian religion," convictions Niebuhr regarded as dangerous.⁵³

The church, no less, is the animating center of humanity's redemption. "[The] church is the Body of Christ. So when the church is true to its nature, it knows neither division nor disunity.... No longer is the church solely in the business of saving individual souls from damnation, but it embodies the 'great event' of the cross by making free space for redemptive community."⁵⁴

King borrowed a term that had been used by the philosopher Josiah Royce, "the Beloved Community," as a redemptive social relationship. "By King's hands, the idea of beloved community was invigorated with theological vitality and moral urgency, so that the prospects of social progress came to look less like evolutionary development and more like a divine gift."⁵⁵ Montgomery was seen as the proving ground. Thus, civil

disobedience was not seen as an end in and of itself, but the means that should lead to reconciliation. “The beloved community remains broken and scattered, an eschatological hope, yet precisely a hope that intensifies rather than absolves us from responsibilities in the here and now.”⁵⁶

The year of 2014 saw much of the same historic encounters and familiar outcomes with law enforcement personnel for many. Sadly, far too many of today’s critical issues have been the same one as far back as I can remember. Unbelievably, it is now 2015 and injustice is increasing. Also rising are discrimination and hatred. The costs of living are increasing, while wages are decreasing. Public education is under attack and on the verge of being destroyed. Schools are more segregated today as they have ever been, even as we just celebrated the sixty-year anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*. For-profit prisons are overflowing due to the mass incarceration of young African Americans or other minorities. Young Blacks are being utilized as seed corn for the harvest of monetary profits. Jails are filled with those who have fallen victim to selective policing, discretionary prosecutions, and mandatory minimum sentencing. Many federal offenders have forfeited their right to vote, even though they have paid their debt to society. Although the number of haves at the high end is increasing, sadly, so is the number of the have-nots.

Voting rights are under constant attack as laws are being devised to keep voters from the polls, under the guise of voter fraud. Our rights as citizens are being usurped by organizations such as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). ALEC is a pay-to-play operation where corporations buy a seat and a vote in coordination with state legislators to advance their legislative wish lists. In turn, corporations receive tax breaks

for their donations, effectively passing their lobbying costs on to taxpayers. Other concerns include the lack of employment and job training in urban areas. Also, the lack of healthy food sources in urban areas has had a profound and long-lasting impact on the good health and the education of the people. It is difficult to learn on an empty stomach.

All of my life experiences have led me to urban ministry. If those in the church are transformed to be transformers, how should we go about transforming our communities? How can we produce jobs and provide job training? How can we produce adequate housing and make it affordable? How can we ensure access to healthy foods and adequate health care? If not us, the church, then who should take on these campaigns? The government? The corporations? No, it is the call and mission of the church to reach and teach all nations.⁵⁷

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”⁵⁸ (Matthew 6:12 KJV)

The Scripture reference that will be used as the foundation for this doctoral project is Luke 16:1-13, the Parable of the Shrewd Manager. The wisdom of this parable will be analyzed to identify a biblical foundation for funding the operations and activities of the church, outside of the paradigm of tithes and offerings. The question I seek to address, therefore, is “What new and innovative funding methods can empower local church ministries to be truly transformative for both its congregants and the larger community?”

I have increasingly become determined to challenge the most common financial management paradigm of the church and the use of the church building. The paradigm of a church building being only for non-profit use may have run its course. Many church buildings today sit idle throughout the week, waiting till Sundays to open its doors for most of their scheduled activities are on Sundays. During the week, the building is used at most one or two days. It begs the question, “How far from the maximal use are most churches?” Also, with mainline church’s membership declining, will the church be able to survive on the subsequent decreasing operational funds? The operation of some churches has become a vicious cycle. The church requires tithes and offerings to be able to sustain itself and its operations. However, if the church catered mainly to the needy—who take up space and resources, but are unable to make substantial contribution—the church may not be able to collect enough tithes and offerings to meet its own needs.

Therefore, the needy may be shunted aside while the church pursues the more affluent. How can a church be the catalyst for transformation and serve those most in need, when it has little to no means of financial support? Perhaps it is time to do church in a new, revolutionary, and more productive way.

Outside of worship services, the church must become more business-minded or for-profit-oriented in order to bring in vital funds. These funds will enable the church to serve in greater and more transformative ways. Rather than being a building dedicated to worship alone, the church can also seek for-profit opportunities through various legal vehicles. The facility can offer many types of services that can bring in needed funds. Examples of such services may include banquets, plays, meeting space for rent, community training events, event planning, etc. The non-profit entity of the church can rent space from the business side of the church. In other words, in order to survive and be effective in the community, the church is going to have to think far outside the paradigm it now finds itself in.

Before addressing Luke 16:1-12 and the Shrewd Manager, let us take a closer look at the concept of tithes and offerings, since they are the primary vehicles that many churches rely upon for funding. Many today use the terms “tithes” and “offerings” synonymously and/or interchangeably. But are they indeed two sides of one coin? According to the *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*, “tithes are one tenth of one’s income, produce, or property as an offering (obligation) to God,”⁵⁹ whereas offerings are considered sacrifices, which are things offered in faith to God.⁶⁰ Jesus’ work of faith on the cross was a sacrificial offering.⁶¹ Now, where does the biblical authority for tithing

come from? In his book, *Understanding Tithing: The Truth About Tithing*, James Curry notes,

The church has been confronted with the question, how does God want His work to be financed? They believe that the answer is obvious, so by carefully and thoroughly examining the Bible as a whole, they believe to have found abundant evidence that a consistent economical manner is addressed within the pages of Holy Scripture and that manner is through tithing.⁶²

Let us therefore carefully and thoroughly examine the Bible to see what economical manner is offered for financing God's work.

The first actual mention of tithe or tithing can be found at Genesis 14:18-20.

¹⁸And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all of his goods.⁶³

A close reading of this passage reveals that Abram was under no obligation to provide any offering, much less a ten percent tithe. There is no evidence that Abram was mandated to produce the tithe in order to be blessed. The Scripture clearly shows that Abram was blessed prior to giving the tithe, and he gave in response to being blessed—not vice versa. Abram gave of his own freewill and seemingly out of his faith and gratitude.

The concept of tithing is next seen at Genesis 28:20-22.

²⁰Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and clothing, ²¹and if I return safely to my father's home, then the Lord will certainly be my God. ²²And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshipping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything he gives me."⁶⁴

Again, we see that there was no mandate for Jacob to tithe ten percent. Jacob seems to be

negotiating with God here. If God would do X, Jacob would do Y in a fair-trade agreement. Jacob added that “if” he returned safely to his father’s house, then and perhaps, only then would God be considered his God. Therefore, God had to meet Jacob’s demands to receive a tithe rather than Jacob being compelled to tithe to receive what he requested or needed.

At 1 Samuel 8:10-18, we find another instance of tithing. Prophet Samuel warned the Israelites concerning the consequences of choosing to install a king.

¹⁰So Samuel passed on the Lord’s warning to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹“This is how a king will reign over you,” Samuel said. “The king will draft your sons and assign them to his chariots and his charioteers, making them run before his chariots. ¹²Some will be generals and captains in his army, some will be forced to plow in his fields and harvest his crops, and some will make his weapons and chariot equipment. ¹³The king will take your daughters from you and force them to cook and bake and make perfumes for him. ¹⁴He will take away the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his own officials. ¹⁵He will take a tenth of your grain and your grape harvest and distribute it among his officers and attendants. ¹⁶He will take your male and female slaves and demand the finest of your cattle and donkeys for his own use. ¹⁷He will demand a tenth of your flocks, and you will be his slaves. ¹⁸When that day comes, you will beg for relief from this king you are demanding, but then the Lord will not help you.”⁶⁵

Samuel warned the Israelites at verse 17 that the king would “demand a tenth of your flocks, and you would be his slaves.” Whereas Abram and Jacob “gave” or offered to “give,” here in 1 Samuel, it is worth noting that the king would “take” a tenth of the Israelites possessions. Therefore, the Israelite King would be no different than all the kings of the Gentiles in taking family members, possessions, and tithes from his subjects.

Perhaps as a consequence of choosing to install a king against God’s warnings, the concept of tithing was included in the Mosaic Law. Malachi 3:6-12 states,

⁶“I am the Lord, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. ⁷Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. “But you ask, ‘How can we return when we have never gone away?’ ⁸“Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! “But you ask, ‘What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ “You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. ⁹You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. ¹⁰Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! ¹¹Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. ¹²“Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.⁶⁶

Malachi 16:1-12 is one of the most quoted scriptural passages for the justification of tithing. Freewill offering was no longer a choice, for now the Israelites would be commanded or compelled to pay tithes. All must bring their tithes into God’s storehouse or face the consequences of not doing so. Although this Scripture is often quoted, does it really apply to the church of today? Let us examine the Scripture more closely.

God’s demand of compulsory tithing was an element of a curse He placed on the nation of Israel due to its failure to acknowledge God by freely giving back to Him. As with the Law of Moses, Galatians teaches us at Galatians 3:10-14,

¹⁰But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God’s Book of the Law.” ¹¹So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” ¹²This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, “It is through obeying the law that a person has life.” ¹³But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our

wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” ¹⁴Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.⁶⁷

In other words, those that choose to live by the Law will be judged according to the Law. Those that choose to live by faith will be judged by their faith. Those that believe in Christ have been redeemed by Christ’s work of faith on the cross as stated at Galatians 3:13. Having been redeemed from the curse of the Law, tithing is no longer compulsory or mandatory. Giving now is done according to one’s freewill, just as it was for Abram and Jacob. If tithing could redeem us or attain blessings for us, then Christ would have died in vain.

We shall now look at what it was that God required as a tithe and what it was to be used for. Deuteronomy 14:22-29 says,

²²“You must set aside a tithe of your crops—one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year. ²³Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship—the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored—and eat it there in his presence. This applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males of your flocks and herds. Doing this will teach you always to fear the Lord your God. ²⁴“Now when the Lord your God blesses you with a good harvest, the place of worship he chooses for his name to be honored might be too far for you to bring the tithe. ²⁵If so, you may sell the tithe portion of your crops and herds, put the money in a pouch, and go to the place the Lord your God has chosen. ²⁶When you arrive, you may use the money to buy any kind of food you want—cattle, sheep, goats, wine, or other alcoholic drink. Then feast there in the presence of the Lord your God and celebrate with your household. ²⁷And do not neglect the Levites in your town, for they will receive no allotment of land among you. ²⁸“At the end of every third year, bring the entire tithe of that year’s harvest and store it in the nearest town. ²⁹Give it to the Levites, who will receive no allotment of land among you, as well as to the foreigners living among you, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, so they can eat and be satisfied. Then the Lord your God will bless you in all your work.”⁶⁸

According to the Scripture, God didn't require money primarily as an item to be tithed. However, in certain situations, the tithe could be turned into money, which would be used to purchase other goods. God required the tithe of the land, such as seeds, fruits, herds and/or flocks. One was to tithe the increase of the seed that the fields produced year by year. However, one was to eat before the Lord the tithe of corn, wine, oil, firstlings of the herds and flocks, in order to learn to fear the Lord. Annually, a portion of the tithes was to go to the support of the Levites, who were not allowed to have possessions like the others. Every three years, the tithes were to be stored in the towns, so that the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless, and the widows of the communities may eat to their satisfaction. These principles are evident from the following passages.

Leviticus 27:30-33,

³⁰“One-tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord and must be set apart to him as holy. ³¹If you want to buy back the Lord's tenth of the grain or fruit, you must pay its value, plus 20 percent. ³²Count off every tenth animal from your herds and flocks and set them apart for the Lord as holy. ³³You may not pick and choose between good and bad animals, and you may not substitute one for another. But if you do exchange one animal for another, then both the original animal and its substitute will be considered holy and cannot be bought back.⁶⁹

Malachi 3:12-15,

¹²“Every third year you must offer a special tithe of your crops. In this year of the special tithe you must give your tithes to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows, so that they will have enough to eat in your towns. ¹³Then you must declare in the presence of the Lord your God, ‘I have taken the sacred gift from my house and have given it to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows, just as you commanded me. I have not violated or forgotten any of your commands. ¹⁴I have not eaten any of it while in mourning; I have not handled it while I was ceremonially unclean; and I have not offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed

the Lord my God and have done everything you commanded me.
¹⁵Now look down from your holy dwelling place in heaven and
 bless your people Israel and the land you swore to our ancestors to
 give us—a land flowing with milk and honey.”⁷⁰

Abram was not commanded or compelled to pay a tithe to God. Abram’s tithe was offered as a freewill gesture to Melchizedek, a king of a certain town. Jacob was not compelled to pay a tithe. He made a freewill offering to God as part of a negotiation with God. If God would fulfill Jacob’s request, Jacob promised to provide a tithe and then Jacob would choose God as his God. Due to the failures of the Israelite Nation, tithing was made compulsory as part of a curse placed upon them by God. We have yet to identify where tithing can be seen as a commandment or ordinance that the church of today is mandated or compelled to follow as directed by God.

What does the New Testament have to say about tithing? The first instance of tithing in the New Testament can be found at Matthew 23:23-24.

²³“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. ²⁴Blind guides! You strain your water so you won’t accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!”⁷¹

As a synoptic gospel, Luke 11:42 is practically the same as Matthew 23:23. Here, Jesus is chastising the Pharisees for their hypocrisy. Whereas the Pharisees were strict in following the Law concerning small things, like tithing the tiniest incomes, they were loose with weightier concerns of the Law, such as justice, mercy, and faith. However, this Scripture does not show Jesus’ approval or disapproval of tithing per se. Surely, the Israelites were still under the Law and they were obligated to tithe. The New Covenant that came through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ had yet to come to

pass at the time of this event.

In the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector at Luke 11:9-14, the hypocrisy of the Pharisee is again brought into light. While the Pharisee boasts of his works, oblivious to his sins, the tax collector laments about his sins and prayed for mercy.

⁹Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: ¹⁰“Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don’t cheat, I don’t sin, and I don’t commit adultery. I’m certainly not like that tax collector!’ ¹²I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’ ¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ ¹⁴I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”⁷²

As is clear from the passage, although the Law required tithing, it was not what Jesus held in highest regard.

The final mention of tithing in the New Testament is found at Hebrews 7:5-9. This Scripture retells the story of Abram giving an offering to Melchizedek. Perhaps it will be beneficial to explore just who was Melchizedek, and then we may better see why Abram chose to give him a tithe. The name Melchizedek means “King of Righteousness,” where “Melek” means king and “Zedek” righteousness. According to Hebrews 7, Melchizedek was King of Salem, which means King of Peace and King of Justice. He had no father or mother, no beginning and no end. Melchizedek was also a priest of the Most High God and would remain a priest forever. Not only was Melchizedek King of Salem, he was also a priest of God Most High.⁷³

When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against

Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, Melchizedek met Abram and blessed him. “²Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means ‘king of justice,’ and king of Salem means ‘king of peace. ³There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.”⁷⁴ Who was he exactly? Was he sinless, to be compared to the Son of God? In Romans 3:9-10, the Apostle Paul tells us, “⁹Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. ¹⁰As the Scriptures say, ‘No one is righteous—not even one.’”⁷⁵ Surely, Melchizedek was more than a mere man. Many see Melchizedek as a pre-incarnation of Jesus the Christ. Note the similarities as depicted by Dr. James Curry in his book, *Understanding Tithing: The Truth About Tithing*, and reproduced in Table 3.⁷⁶

It is vital to note that Jesus is a high priest in the order of Melchizedek, not the order of Levi or Aaron. While the Levite Priests were compelled to collect tithes, neither Melchizedek nor Jesus was a descendant of Levi. The Scriptures tell us that the Levites were men that would die. Melchizedek had no antecedents and Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. Both Melchizedek and Jesus are destined to live forever. The Law established the priesthood of Levi and the Law could not produce the perfection required by God. Therefore, God created a new priesthood in the order of Melchizedek, to which Jesus also belongs. Hebrews 7 tells us that if there was a priesthood change, the law must also be changed to allow it. Unlike the mortal men that descended from Levi, Jesus is holy, blameless, without the stain of sin, and will live forever.

	Melchizedek Genesis 12:18-20	Christ
Priest to Abraham	Abraham offered tithes to Melchizedek	Abraham saw Christ and rejoiced at his day (John 8:54-59)
King and Priest in Jerusalem	Melchizedek was the King and Priest of Salem (Jerusalem)	Jesus will be both King and Priest of Jerusalem. Jesus was presented as King from birth to death. He prayed and interceded for the city. He will return as both King and Priest. Matthew 24:30, Matthew 27:37, Matthew 23:37-39.
Offers Bread to Abraham	Melchizedek offered bread to Abraham after his victories of the kings	Jesus offered himself as the bread of life to Abraham's descendants. (John 6:33, 53-58, Luke 22:19)
Offered wine	Melchizedek offered wine to Abraham	Jesus offered his blood as wine to Abraham's offspring (John 6:55, Luke 22:20-22)
Greater than Abraham	Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, because he received Abraham's offering for God.	Jesus was greater than Abraham (John 8:58) Aaron's priesthood was a picture of the Messiah's greater priesthood
Blessed Abraham	Melchizedek blessed Abraham	Abraham was blessed by Messiah (John 8:56)
King of Peace (Salem)	The name for Jerusalem is Peace (Salem). Melchizedek is King of Peace	One of the titles for Messiah is Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6). Christ as King of Jerusalem fulfills the foreshadowing of Melchizedek. (Zechariah 14)
King of Righteousness	Melchizedek's name means "King of Righteousness"	Christ is the King of Righteousness
Priesthood	Not of the tribe of Levi	Of the Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10)
Duration	No Beginning and End	No Beginning and End
Tithes	Received Tithes from Levi in the person of Abraham	Received tithes from Levi as the "Glory of the Lord" in His pre-incarnate state.
Tribe	Outside of Levi	Outside of Levi

TABLE 3. Melchizedek/Christ Contrast

The Law made the Levites priests, but Jesus is Priest by solemn oath. Tithing was part of the Law that established the Levitical priests. In Romans, it is said,

¹⁹Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. ²⁰For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.... ²⁴Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.⁷⁷

Abraham's payment of a tenth of the spoils of war to Melchizedek speaks to the greatness of Melchizedek. Hebrews 7 says,

⁵Now the law of Moses required that the priests, who are descendants of Levi, must collect a tithe from the rest of the people of Israel, who are also descendants of Abraham. ⁶But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing upon Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God. ⁷And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed. ⁸The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on. ⁹In addition, we might even say that these Levites—the ones who collect the tithe—paid a tithe to Melchizedek when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. ¹⁰For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's body when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him. ¹¹So if the priesthood of Levi, on which the law was based, could have achieved the perfection God intended, why did God need to establish a different priesthood, with a priest in the order of Melchizedek instead of the order of Levi and Aaron? ¹²And if the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed to permit it. ¹³For the priest we are talking about belongs to a different tribe, whose members have never served at the altar as priests. ¹⁴What I mean is, our Lord came from the tribe of Judah, and Moses never mentioned priests coming from that tribe. ¹⁵This change has been made very clear since a different priest, who is like Melchizedek, has appeared. ¹⁶Jesus became a priest, not by meeting the physical requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. ¹⁷And the psalmist pointed this out when he prophesied; "You are a priest

forever in the order of Melchizedek.”¹⁸ Yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside because it was weak and useless.¹⁹ For the law never made anything perfect. But now we have confidence in a better hope, through which we draw near to God.²⁰ This new system was established with a solemn oath. Aaron’s descendants became priests without such an oath,²¹ but there was an oath regarding Jesus. For God said to him, “The Lord has taken an oath and will not break his vow: ‘You are a priest forever.’”²² Because of this oath, Jesus is the one who guarantees this better covenant with God.²³ There were many priests under the old system, for death prevented them from remaining in office.²⁴ But because Jesus lives forever, his priesthood lasts forever.²⁵ Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.²⁶ He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honor in heaven.²⁷ Unlike those other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices every day. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as the sacrifice for the people’s sins.²⁸ The law appointed high priests who were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed his Son with an oath, and his Son has been made the perfect High Priest forever.⁷⁸

After careful examination of scripture and the biblical concept of tithing, the logical conclusion is that Christians of the New Covenant are under no obligation or command to tithe. Tithing was given to the Israelites as part of a curse and as an element of the Mosaic Law. What Christians call tithing is in essence an offering and should be given out of faith and reverence. No particular amount, such as 10%, is required. 2 Corinthians 9:7 states, “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. ‘For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’”⁷⁹ There is no legalistic obligation or commandment concerning tithing under the New Covenant, as established by and through Jesus the Christ. When Apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthian believers at 16:1-2 to set aside an offering for others (in this instance, believers in Jerusalem), this offering does not constitute a tithe. Christians do

not pay tithes. Christians give offerings. God required the Israelites to give their first fruits as an honor unto Him. In fulfilling the Law, Christ fulfilled the requirement of first fruits, for Christ is the first fruit of those that have falling asleep (died), according to 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.

²⁰But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.⁸⁰

What should move Christians to give is the same thing that moved Abraham to give: the desire to honor God. Christians’ faith in a loving, forgiving, and merciful God produces the motivation to give back to Him. Many equate the principle of sowing and reaping to the concept of giving. I don’t see this principle relating to giving per se. Perhaps Luke 6:38 is more apropos: “Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”⁸¹ However, this should not be seen as spiritual financing or an investment plan. Scripture tells us that God blesses whom He pleases. Romans 9:14-16 says, ¹⁴“What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ ¹⁶It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.”⁸²

As pertaining to the principle of sowing and reaping, in Galatians 6 at verse 7, Paul says, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”⁸³ In other words: you reap what you sow; what goes around comes around; or actions have consequences. The Book of Job states at 4:8, “As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.”⁸⁴ Luke echoes, “For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you,”⁸⁵ and, “Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of his fury will fail.”⁸⁶ Paul states that whoever sows to the flesh shall reap corruption, but he or she that sows to the Spirit reap eternal life.⁸⁷ When we have the opportunity, we should not shrink from doing good, especially doing good unto those that are also in the family of faith.⁸⁸ We’ve established that we shall reap what we sow. Therefore, if we sow hate, we shall reap hate. If we sow dissension, we shall reap dissension. If we sow compassion, we shall reap compassion. If we sow love, we shall reap love. Scripture tells us to judge not, lest we be judged; and if we give, we shall receive. Luke 6:37-38 says,

³⁷Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸Give, and you will receive.” Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.⁸⁹

It is clear that although the Law cannot deliver us, good works directed towards one another can be beneficial and rewarding. Perhaps the rewards are not immediately seen, but they will eventually reap a harvest of good. These good spiritual works cannot attain for us salvation, but they may produce a harvest of blessings and positive results in this life. Likewise, sowing to the flesh risks destruction.

Offerings – one example of good spiritual works – do not take only the form of money. Our offerings could and should also include our time and talents. Ephesians 5:15-17 says, “¹⁵So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.”⁹⁰ Also, 1 Peter 4:10-11 asks,

¹⁰God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. ¹¹Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever!⁹¹

We should offer ourselves—including our bodies—as a living sacrifice, as urged by Paul in Romans 12: “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.”⁹² This is truly the way to worship an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God.

Now that we have examined the concept of tithes and offering, we shall proceed to unpack the foundational Scripture of this project, Luke 16:1-18. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager, also called the Unjust Steward, is not very easily understood. Let us first define what a parable is. According to the *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*,

A parable is a short, simple story designed to communicate a spiritual truth, religious principle, or moral lesson; a figure of speech in which truth is illustrated by a comparison or example drawn from everyday experiences. The Greek word for parable literally means, ‘a laying by the side of’ or ‘casting alongside,’ thus ‘a comparison or likeness.’ In a parable something is placed alongside something else, in order that one may throw light on the other.⁹³

Parables were one of Jesus’ characteristic methods of teaching, and most parables had

one central or overarching point. Parables must be interpreted within the context of its time and Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager is recorded in Luke 16:1-12:

¹Jesus told this story to his disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money. ²So the employer called him in and said, 'What's this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.' ³"The manager thought to himself, 'Now what? My boss has fired me. I don't have the strength to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. ⁴Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired.' ⁵"So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe him?' ⁶The man replied, 'I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.' So the manager told him, 'Take the bill and quickly change it to 400 gallons.' ⁷"And how much do you owe my employer?' he asked the next man. 'I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat,' was the reply. 'Here,' the manager said, 'take the bill and change it to 800 bushels.' ⁸"The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light. ⁹Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home. ¹⁰"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. ¹¹And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? ¹²And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?"⁹⁴

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager is broken into three parts. Verses 1–8a tells the story in the parable. Verses 8b-13 lays out Jesus' application of the parable. Verses 14-15 contain Jesus' response to the Pharisees that were present. Stewardship, the focal point of this parable, is the management of another person's property, finances, or household affairs. As far as Christians are concerned, stewardship involves the responsibility of managing God's work through the church. God has appointed all Christians to be His stewards on earth. Being a steward is a necessary part of believing the gospel, even if it

involves sacrificing personal rewards.⁹⁵ 1 Corinthians. 9:17-18 says, “¹⁷If I were doing this on my own initiative, I would deserve payment. But I have no choice, for God has given me this sacred trust. ¹⁸What then is my pay? It is the opportunity to preach the Good News without charging anyone. That’s why I never demand my rights when I preach the Good News.”⁹⁶ Stewards will be held accountable for the way in which they manage God’s affairs.

In the 15th chapter of the Book of Luke, Jesus tells three parables to the Pharisees. The first parable was the Parable of the Lost Sheep, Luke 15:1-7. The second parable was the Parable of the Lost Coin, Luke 15:8-10. The third parable was the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32. These parables depicted Jesus passion and commitment for the lost, illustrating that all of us have worth. At the beginning of the 16th chapter of Luke, Jesus turned to the disciples, with the Pharisees still present, and told the Parable of the Unjust Steward, Luke 16:1-8a. In Luke 16:8b-13, Jesus taught the application of the parable. After the Pharisee’s response to the Parable, Jesus responded to them at Luke 16:14-15. The above division of Luke 16 will be used as an outline in this review.

In the Parable of the Shrewd Manager (or, as some translations call him, “the Unjust Steward”), a rich man received a report that his manager, tasked with managing his affairs, was wasting his money and/or goods (v. 1). The rich man called on the manager to make an account of his actions, for surely he would be fired (v. 2). After being informed of his impending firing and having to now face the consequences of his action, the manager began to make introspection, in order to ascertain the best course of action (v. 3). The manager was not much into manual labor, such as digging ditches, and he was too proud to beg (v. 3). He then devised a scheme that would ensure for him

plenty of friends and a place to stay (v. 4). Therefore, the manager requested an audience with those that owed a debt to the rich man, the manager's boss (v. 5). The first individual owed a debt of 800 gallons of oil. The manager changed the debt to 400 gallons (v. 6). The second individual owed 1,000 bushels of wheat, but the manager changed the debt to 800 bushels (v. 7). The rich man actually admired this shrewdness of the manager (v. 8a).

Verse 8b remarks how true it is that the children of this world are shrewder in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light. The lesson is to be found in verses 9-13. Firstly, if one were to use their worldly resources to benefit others and make friends, when their earthly possessions are gone, they will be welcomed to an eternal home. If one is faithful in little things, one will be faithful in large ones. But if one is dishonest in little things, one won't be honest with greater responsibilities. If one were untrustworthy with worldly wealth, no one would trust him or her with the true riches of heaven. Lastly, if a person is not faithful with other people's possessions or properties, why should he be trusted with properties of his own? "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (v. 13).

Upon hearing these things, the Pharisees, who dearly loved money, scoffed at Jesus. Jesus said to them, "You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God" (vv. 14-15).

¹⁶Until John the Baptist, the law of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. ¹⁷But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is eager to get in. But that doesn't mean that the law has lost its force. It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the smallest point of God's law to be overturned.⁹⁷

I prefer the title, “shrewd manager” to “unjust steward.” The reason is that in spite of the manager’s behavior that got him into this predicament, he is not being unjust in this instance. He is being shrewd to get himself out of the predicament. The manager changing the debtors’ bills appears to be a further act of cheating his master. Or is it? The manager’s actions ingratiated the debtors to him, but they do not cheat the rich man out of what he would have normally received. The manager simply removed the interest that he had added to the debt as his compensation. The master was not commending the manager for his prior unjust behavior; he was commending him for his ingenuity to overcome his circumstance. In the end, the master received what was due him.

To achieve a greater understanding of the Scripture, we must unpack two terms, “shrewdness” and “worldly resources.” To be shrewd is not always a negative, bad, or an evil thing. There are good and positive aspects of being shrewd, such as being a shrewd investor. The term “shrewd” in this case is defined in Strong’s Concordance to mean prudence and/or wisdom, characterized by keen awareness.⁹⁸ As Jesus taught, worldly people can be very resourceful when it comes to dealing with the world around them, while people of light leaves much to be desired in this area.

“World resources” is also known as “unrighteous mammon.” Mammon is defined in the *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible* as referring to wealth, especially wealth that is used in opposition to God. Mammon is a transliteration of the Aramaic word “mamon,” which means “wealth,” “riches,” “gold,” and “material possessions.”⁹⁹ Mammon is also used as a pejorative today to depict unjust worldly gain or as a false god.

At Luke 16:9, Jesus explained the lesson of the parable: we ought not to use worldly resources for evil or selfish reasons, but for the benefit of others, which would

make friends for us. These friends then would welcome us into eternal homes. Who exactly are these friends? Isn't it only the Father and the Son who can welcome us into eternal homes? Therefore, the rich man in this parable is God and we are His stewards. In John 14:3, Jesus promised to go and prepare a place for us, and at a certain time Jesus would come back for us, so that we may be where He is. We must look to another parable for a profound response to this, the Parable of the Sheep and Goats found in Matthew 25:31-46. The Parable of the Sheep and Goats speaks of the time to come when the Son of Man comes in His glory. All the nations will separate the people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats.

³⁴“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ ³⁷“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’”

⁴⁰“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ ⁴¹“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ ⁴⁴“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ ⁴⁵“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ ⁴⁶“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.””¹⁰⁰

Therefore, what we do for others, especially the “least of these,” it is as if we are doing it unto God. That is why the Luke 16:9 says, “Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.” As we do good unto others, we are doing good unto God. It is mammon and possessions that enable us to share with and be a blessing to others. As Christians, we must be good stewards of all we are entrusted with. This parable warns us against self-indulgence, and reminds us that we are blessed to be a blessing. We must make proper use of the riches and possessions we have been given. The 27th Psalm of David tells us that “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.”¹⁰¹ We must remain aware of and vigilant against the corruptive nature of riches.

We must wisely and faithfully make use of the world’s mammon to do the work of God. Another parable makes this clear, which is the Parable of the Talents found at Matthew 25:14-30. In the Parable of Talents, three individuals are given talents. One is given five talents, another two talents, and a third one talent. The individuals with the five and two talents invested and they increased their talents with differing results. They were rewarded for trying, knowing that God reaps where He has not sown and gathers where He has not scattered seed. The third individual hoarded or buried his talent, and failed to produce an increase. What is planted produces abundance, but what is buried is dead, producing nothing. The master sorely chastised this individual for being slothful and lazy.¹⁰² In his book *Luke: An Ironside Expository Commentary*, H. A. Ironside, speaking of money, stated, “We can not live without it in a world like this. But if God has given us

wealth, we should use it to His glory in spreading His gospel, and in relieving distressed and suffering humanity.”¹⁰³

We will be held accountable for our stewardship. Just like the Shrewd Manager, there will come a day when we will have to give an account for our actions or the lack thereof. If we were to hoard for ourselves talents, riches, or possessions as the third individual in the Parable of the Talents did, God will not be pleased. We must invest in God’s Kingdom with the thought of eternity for all of God’s children. Knowing that we will be judged on our stewardship ought to move us to faithful endeavors. In 1 Timothy 6, the Apostle Paul warned Timothy about false teachers and those that would use godliness to attain wealth, and exhorted him that true godliness and contentment is great wealth. For people who selfishly long to attain great wealth are vulnerable to falling into temptation and being trapped by their foolish and harmful desires, which may plunge them into ruin and/or destruction. To stray from true faith may bring many sorrows. “For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.”¹⁰⁴ H. A. Ironside asks, “Have you noticed that a man’s use of his money is often the acid test of his character? A man who loves money will be unkind and evil in many other ways.... If a man loves money inordinately he exposes himself to every other kind of iniquity.”¹⁰⁵ We are merely stewards of what belongs to God. Rather than allowing mammon to be our master, we must make mammon our servant in our service to God.

This brings us to the Parable of the Faithful Servant found at Luke 12.

⁴²And the Lord replied, “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. ⁴³If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. ⁴⁴I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁵But what if the servant thinks, ‘My master won’t be

back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? ⁴⁶The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful. ⁴⁷“And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished. ⁴⁸But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.”¹⁰⁶

Let us also heed Apostle Paul’s instruction to Timothy,

¹⁷Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. ¹⁸Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. ¹⁹By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.¹⁰⁷

The titles of “the steward” and “the servant” are synonymous, for both are under the rule of a master. Their job is well-defined and their responsibility is great. If they get lazy and apathetic about their duties, and fail to do what they were called to do, there are consequences. This is the very point of the parable: everyone to whom much is given, from him or her much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him or her will be asked even more.

Apostle Paul’s instruction on giving is found at 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

⁶Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” ⁸And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. ⁹As the Scriptures say, “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.” ¹⁰For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will

provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. ¹¹Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. ¹²So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. ¹³As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. ¹⁴And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. ¹⁵Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!”¹⁰⁸

Believers today feel compelled to tithe and many feel the guilt of not tithing. However, in reality, what they are giving and are expected to give is an offering of freewill. Christians are under no obligation to tithe, as I demonstrated earlier. Apostle Paul stated that believers should set aside “a portion” of their earnings in support of others. He did not suggest a mandatory amount or percentage. God required and expected the Israelites to give of their firstfruits, and Jesus became the firstfruits, fulfilling the requirement of the Law, to the favor of us all. “20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the requirement for tithing is now obsolete. To continue to tithe undermines Jesus’ work of faith on the cross. It also may cause individuals to give in hopes of receiving a blessing from God. As a consequence, when the troubles of life come, they may feel that the troubles are a consequence of their inadequate giving. God blesses whom He pleases, and salvation is free to those that have the faith to believe.

In the following chapters we will explore a number of ways for churches to supplement their offerings, as well as to enhance their ability to attain transformational funding. Some of those possibilities include Faith-Based Grants, Community

Development Corporations (CDC), Ecclesiastical Entrepreneurism. Business as Mission (BAM), and even for-profit vehicles.

The Parable of the Talents can be considered an example of ecclesiastical entrepreneurship. All three servants were given gifts and expected to increase their gift, by producing a return on their investments. For-profit opportunities would enable the church to be job creators and transformers of communities. Business as Mission (BAM) is where business and mission converges. BAM also uses for-profit business activities to take the gospel throughout the world, creating jobs and reaching those marginalized or left behind by society.

For those concerned with the boundary between church and state, allow me to address that here. The answer for me can be found at Mark 12:13-17. The Pharisees and supporters of Herod set out to trap Jesus for not paying taxes to Rome and Caesar. A wrong answer by Jesus would have given pretext for His arrest.

¹⁴“Teacher,” they said, “we know how honest you are. You are impartial and don’t play favorites. You teach the way of God truthfully. Now tell us—is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? ¹⁵Should we pay them, or shouldn’t we?” Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and said, “Why are you trying to trap me? Show me a Roman coin, and I’ll tell you.” ¹⁶When they handed it to him, he asked, “Whose picture and title are stamped on it?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. ¹⁷“Well, then,” Jesus said, “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.”¹¹⁰

Therefore, all things that pertain to faith worship should remain non-profit and untaxed. All other transactions that concern or utilize the commercial and financial entities of the world system should very well be taxed. This not only benefits the church, it benefits the whole country. Give unto America what belongs to America. Shared sacrifice could and should lead to the expansion of the economy and the benefit of all.

In his book, *Extortion From The Pulpit: The Real Truth About Tithing*, Harvey Waller, Jr., states,

First of all, we need to understand that we do not have to give offerings or money at all to merit our needs and desires from God the Father. ...Many ministers are apparently somewhat confused in terms of fully understanding who we actually are in Christ, what we possess regarding our inheritance, and that God through Christ has blessed us and given us all things.¹¹¹

Waller further contends that God does not respond to our needs based on the seed money that we sow: “Although the law and principle of sowing and reaping is valid and scriptural for both the Old and New Testament, this principle or law was never designed or intended by God the Father to be the basis upon which He would meet our needs and desires as children under the New Testament.”¹¹² Works of the Law will not attain for us righteousness or justification—only faith in Christ can do that. Abel’s offering was deemed by God to be more excellent for it was given in faith. Abel’s offering was not compelled. May our offerings also be from the heart! Matthew 15:8-9 tells us, “⁸These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. ⁹And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”¹¹³ In Luke, we are told, “Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”¹¹⁴

As cheerful givers, we should give out of faithfulness in response to God’s faithfulness to us. We should give to advance the Kingdom of God. We should give to provide for the needs of those in need. At 2 Corinthians 9:6-12 we find another example of reaping and sowing.

⁶Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a

small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." ⁸And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. ⁹As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." ¹⁰For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. ¹¹Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. ¹²So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers ... will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.¹¹⁵

In conclusion, tithing is not mandated under the new covenant according to Scripture. Under the Law, tithing required the first fruits of the Israelites to whom the Law was given. Just as Jesus fulfilled the Law, Jesus became the firstfruits. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."¹¹⁶ We are subject to the principle of reaping and sowing. One's harvest or return-on-investment (ROI) is dependent upon what, where, and how one sows. An offering is a sacrifice or a tribute, just as the poor widow's offering was a sacrifice for her.¹¹⁷

The requirement to tithe can and does produce negative and detrimental consequences in those that are unable to comply. The failure to fulfill the Law of Moses produces guilt, shame, and condemnation within us. Similarly, the obligation to tithe is a stumbling block to those that, due to their plight in life, are simply not able to tithe. The inability to tithe produces guilt, shame, condemnation, and hopelessness. Many become hopeless, even to the extent of resigning themselves to believe that God cannot love them and will not bless them. They believe that God has already condemned them to hell on earth and He is just waiting to make it official after judgment. They are outside of God's

will. Yet, they are helpless to change their situation on their own. They have lost all hope. Where there is no hope, there is no life!

It is unconscionable and unforgivable for the church to put believers in such helpless and hopeless situations. Many believers give what they can. Yet, they fall into deeper debt, and may eventually fall away from God. If one believes that God won't bless them, unless or until they reach some magical amount of giving, they will eventually believe that they will never be able to give enough to earn God's love and forgiveness.

Everything a needy person gives is a sacrifice. Each gift is given out of their lack. While those that have, give out of their abundance. A mandate to tithe would heap guilt and shame upon those that cannot, which otherwise would have to give up subsistence, leaving them in even greater financial hardship. On the other hand, those capable of giving more would be limited to ten percent, thereby making no sacrifice at all.

The poor have been misled to believe that they are cursed. Their lack is proof of their spiritual condition, exacerbating their hopelessness. The rich have been misled to believe that they are blessed. Their abundance is proof of their spiritual condition, exacerbating their covetousness. It is he or she that is faithful beyond their circumstance, whether lack or surplus, that is blessed in God's eyes and will be even more blessed of God. Tithing is not a requirement of salvation. Salvation comes through faith in He who gave the ultimate sacrifice -- Jesus the Christ. Jesus gave all for all of us!

“16 For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. 18 “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.”¹¹⁸

“1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. 3 The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. 4 He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.”¹¹⁹

46 I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. 47 I will not judge those who hear me but don’t obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. 48 But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. 49 I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. 50 And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.”¹²⁰

We are not owners; we are stewards of our Master, God Almighty. Many of the parables are about money and our relationship with it and each other, to drive home the truth of our identity as stewards and relationship to what we are entrusted with. As good stewards, may we hear our Master say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant! You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!”¹²¹ Recall Apostle Paul’s words on this point:

⁵After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God’s servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. ⁶I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. ⁷It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What’s important is that God makes the seed grow. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. ⁹For we are both God’s workers. And you are God’s field. You are God’s building.¹²²

In Mark 10:28-31 also we are reminded:

Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."¹²³

If we first seek God's Kingdom and God's righteousness, then we need not worry about what we shall eat or drink, or even what we shall wear. All these things will therefore be added unto us.¹²⁴ The giving of our talents, time, and treasure is but seed planting that will reap a harvest for the Kingdom of God.

The late Pastor Harold Trammel authored *Rules for Giving to the Kingdom of God*, providing principles that would prove profitable for those in ministry to consider. In the spirit of full disclosure, Trammel – long-time pastor of Jezreel Baptist Church, Washington, DC – expressed that he did not think tithing was de-emphasized in the New Testament. However, I do appreciate the term he used in the book to describe Christians: “spiritual businessmen.” I also believe that giving was not de-emphasized in the New Testament. However, our giving should be done through faith and love, not through compulsion. Tithing was dependent upon the obedience of those that were commanded to do so, the Israelites. Offerings, on the other hand, are given out of the freewill and gratitude of the giver. Trammel and I are more in agreement than not, such as in this observation: “The financing of the Church is through tithes and offerings. This is not to be done on a legalistic basis, though. It is giving because a giving God has given freely to us. He sends us into His Kingdom to reap fruit for Him by investing our time, our talent, and our treasures.”¹²⁵ I find Trammel's rules for financial stewardship useful and practical, and will share them below.

Pastor Harold Trammel's Rules for Financial Stewardship¹²⁶

“Rule #1: The goods consigned to the servant (steward) belong to the master.

- (a) Tithing admits that all which one has received is from God.
- (b) The purpose of the consignment is to equip us to work for Him.
- (c) By His grace we are stewards and temporary users of His goods.

Rule #2: The amount of goods consigned was based on the master's evaluation of the ability of each servant.

- (a) Everyone had at least one talent.
- (b) All did not receive the same.

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will (1 Corinthians 12:11)

Rule #3: Each servant was given full authority for handling the goods consigned to him.

- (a) We are spiritual businessmen for the Lord.
- (b) We are to use our God-given ability and use the goods consigned.

Rule #4: Each is called upon to give a strict accounting.

- (a) When the accounting will take place is uncertain.
- (b) It is certain that we will eventually give an accounting.

Rule #5: Each servant was required to show a gain.

Rule #6: Unproductive stewards suffered two judgments.

- (a) What talent they had was taken away.
- (b) They were cast into outer darkness.”

CHAPTER FIVE:

TRANSFORMATIVE MINISTRIES

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”¹²⁷ (Matthew 6:13 KJV)

The Book of Numbers Chapter 35 talks about Cities of Refuge. The Cities of Refuge were part of the cities and land that were apportioned to the Levites or the priests of the Lord, who depended upon the giving, tithes and offerings of the other tribes. Therefore, God apportioned to the Levites 48 cities. Of these 48 cities throughout the land, six were designated as “Cities of Refuge.” The six Cities of Refuge mentioned were Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan. They were especially set up as places where those who had committed involuntary manslaughter could seek refuge until they could be tried. If the accused had chosen to leave the City of Refuge prior to his or her trial, or prior to the death of the current high priest, the avenger could rightfully and lawfully kill the accused.

Spiritually, the Cities of Refuge can be seen as a representation of Jesus the Christ. Due to our failings and shortcomings, we seek refuge in Jesus from the Accuser. The Accuser is he that the Scriptures tell us came to steal, kill, and destroy.¹²⁸ According to the Law of Moses, we are all guilty and the wages for that guilt is condemnation and death. The Scriptures also tells us that Jesus came that we may have life, and a life more abundant.¹²⁹ Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who seek and find refuge in Christ Jesus.¹³⁰ Those of us who have accepted the call to carry on the work of Jesus must

also bear our cross to provide as much of a refuge as possible to those seeking a place of refuge from the ravages of the world.

Here I will highlight several ministries, service organizations, and individuals that are doing transformative and wondrous works and services to provide support and refuge for many. They are doing this through personal sacrifice, in an entrepreneurial spirit, and with the contributions and offerings of many individuals.

In his book, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, the great theologian and educator Howard Thurman sought “to inquire into the content of [Jesus’] teaching with reference to the disinherited and the underprivileged.”¹³¹ Thurman depicted the disinherited and the underprivileged as “the man who stands with his back against the wall.”¹³² These are people whom society seems to have left behind and considers as nothing, of no consequence, or people who are dispossessed. The question therefore is “What in the world does this Jesus of Nazareth have to say to the people of today whose backs are against the wall?”

I was moved beyond measure when I met the Methodist Reverend Lorenza Andrade Smith. With the blessing of her bishop, Smith had taken a vow of poverty. Giving up her salary, she lived on the street with the homeless. This is a wonderful and inspiring example of changing the paradigm of church and the church building. Smith provides the homeless a voice with which to cry out. She indicated that she does not speak for the homeless, but provides a space so that their voices may be heard. She asked, “How would you show the love of Christ? The poor show us who we are and the prophets tell us whom we can be. The number one killer of those that live on the street is not drugs or alcohol, but it is loneliness. We must not fear those who are different! Once

we have fear for something, it diminishes our love for it.”¹³³ We as a society fear the homeless, the poor, the physically challenged, and the homosexual. As a result, we show these people little love. The Word says, “God’s perfect love drives all fear away!”¹³⁴ Therefore, once again, love is key and the more excellent way.

I was very excited by my visit to Pastor Joe Daniels’ church and the vision that he has set for Emory UMC and its community. Daniels’ vision epitomizes this new church paradigm that I have been advocating. Daniels is making “REAL” real in real time. “REAL” is an acronym that stands for Relevant, Enthusiastic, Authentic, and Loving, which comes from his book, *The Power of REAL, Changing Lives, Changing Churches, Changing Communities*. According to Daniels, as a catalyst of change in a REAL church, the Holy Spirit can create a revival that transforms lives, communities, and the world, in the name of Jesus. Pastor Daniels is engaging his community, as well as private and public entities to realize the vision and goals of Emory. To do so, Daniels is undertaking efforts to engage various aspects of the community by community service, community organizing, and community development.

Daniels shared with me his vision for his congregation and the community that surrounds the church. As part of his vision, what will be called “The Beacon Center” is a \$44 million dollar multipurpose housing, congregational and community development project being launched by the Emory United Methodist Church and its 501(c)(3) community development organization, The Emory Beacon of Light, Inc. The Beacon Center will provide spaces to transition people from homelessness to permanent residency. It will provide families, veterans, and senior citizens with affordable rental housing. The facility also will be a resource for the community by offering its multi-

purpose space, full-service banquet facility, office leasing services, and commercial development. All of this will be created around a newly renovated 500-seat multipurpose sanctuary and community theatre with underground parking. The leaders of the ministry are hoping for settlement in late December 2014 or early January 2015, with groundbreaking to follow shortly thereafter. (<http://emoryfellowship.org/the-beacon-center/>).

Throughout my life, I have driven through the streets of inner city neighborhoods or have seen life there depicted on television or the big screen. However, subsequent to visits to such areas and actual interactions with real people, I now know that hopelessness is all too real and vivid for residents there. I saw what it looks like to literally have one's back against the wall, but I can't personally understand what it must feel like to have no hope for tomorrow. In the Sandtown area of Baltimore, Maryland, hopelessness was palpable and visible on many of the faces we encountered and in their eyes. We saw the hurting, the hungry, the homeless, and the hopeless. The questions remain: Is there a Word for these? Who will heal those that are hurting? Who will feed those that hunger? Who will house those that are homeless? Who will provide hope for the hopeless, the disinherited?

Such people are everywhere in the Sandtown area of Baltimore. The neighborhood is like an island of despair and hopelessness. It is either a desert within the city or a concrete jungle! People do what they feel they need to do just to survive. I suppose many of them feel that they just need to make it through the day – if they could just make it through the day, tomorrow would take care of itself. It was heartbreaking to

hear that within a couple days of our tour of Sandtown, at least five individuals had lost their lives to violence. Now, that is having your back against the wall!

Leading the tour of Sandtown was Pastor Rodney Hudson of Ames Memorial United Methodist Church, which is located in Sandtown. Hudson gave us a small taste of his “Ministry by Walking Around.” Ministry by Walking Around can be a transformative ministry. With a solid presence and reputation in his community, Pastor Rodney Hudson had legitimate ownership and status there, which was evident in his interactions with those we encountered as we walked. During our walk, the pastor was recognized, known, and respected as pastor and he was addressed as such. I truly admired Pastor Rodney Hudson and the impact he is making in Sandtown.

Pastor Hudson’s status in his community brought to life the community development strategy of Dr. John Perkins, which embodies relocation, reconciliation, and redistribution. Pastor Hudson is a fixture in his community, not just another well-wisher passing through or visiting. He lives and works amongst them, and shares in their challenges and sufferings on a daily basis. To the community, Pastor Hudson could very well be one of the only incarnations of Jesus they get to see. He is a valuable representation of Jesus and the Word of God. Pastor Hudson also seeks to reconcile people with God, with themselves, and with one another. He uses what resources he has to support, encourage, and empower the people of his community. Most of his resources comes from the tithes and offerings of his congregation. It isn’t much, but they share as much as they could.

Ministry by walking, for me, is the epitome of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus’s ministry was a ministry of walking around. He walked around and met people where they were,

and addressed their needs as He encountered them. “The Son of Man (Jesus) did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”¹³⁵ What a beautiful, selfless, and effective way to approach ministry by showing others the love of Christ through one’s own life, works, and presence.

As “Ministry by Walking Around” energized my compassion for those in need, the concept of “Theological Reflection” also resonated profoundly with me. In my readings, I have come to understand that theological reflection does not come from the study of Scripture or religious research, but begins with the suffering, the pain, the struggle, and the injustice shared by a community. As such, theological reflection emanates from the experiences and the stories of those affected. Theological reflection is then depicted in the stories that we heard and witnessed from real people – stories that are raw, real, and relevant, stories that are vivid and moving. From the fight for survival story told by the queenly, distinguished lady with HIV to the song of the lady with the angelic voice that beckoned to be taken to the King, although, she had very little to offer, we were tremendously, spiritually fed. I was affected by the resiliency and perseverance of the people. How they created or clung to whatever gave them hope! It is these small threads of hope that will eventually be woven into a mighty rope that could ultimately bind us all together, transforming us through and by the Spirit of God.

Thurman’s question of how the gospel can be helpful to the needy is just as relevant today. What Thurman addressed is still being addressed or re-addressed today. Thurman believes that not only is Jesus’ message relevant, it is a message that can still empower and transform. Therefore, it must be asked – who will ensure that those who need to hear the message of Jesus indeed gets to hear it? Romans 10:14 asks, “But how

can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?¹³⁶ That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”¹³⁷ People must first be told of the good news.

The realities of our society and our reflections upon those realities undergird our praxis, which may inspire or motivate us to seek to transform our society for the betterment of all. We, as a community, can work in our own best interest to effect meaningful change. It is within our reflections that we can find solidarity with Jesus through Jesus’ own life and the society that He lived within. This is perhaps one of Thurman’s main focuses. Jesus was a son of the slums of Nazareth! His to-be disciple asks, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”¹³⁸ Jesus too lived in a society that had His people’s backs against the wall. To grasp the ministry of Jesus, one must understand the gravity of His circumstances. He too lived in a world full of oppression, exploitation, and violence. Yet, Jesus brought light into a dark world and showed us how to live above our circumstances. Jesus also showed us how to love our neighbor—all of our neighbors, even those we disagree with. Therefore, through love, we can transform individuals and subsequently, communities.

C. Anthony Hunt addressed more specifically the theological task of African American churches in his book, *Upon the Rock*. Hunt contended that such an effort “involves wholistically addressing the moral and social matters which affect black families and communities. This is accomplished through the continued discovery and cultivation of those spiritual, human, relational and material resources which have served to sustain the church over time.”¹³⁹ Hunt maintained that the church is called to live out

its faith in a balance approach, termed the “Wesley Quadrilateral” by United Methodist historical theologian Albert Outler.¹⁴⁰ Hunt further stated that the Bible must be shown to be relevant to the realities of today. I see this as being along the same lines as Thurman’s question. This kind of leadership has been the historic role of the black church.

In considering this issue further, Hunt asked, “What does God require of the church?”¹⁴¹ Hunt held out John 21:15-17 as an example of Jesus teaching Peter that “our love of Christ is best demonstrated in the world through service with, and empowerment of those who are oppressed.”¹⁴² I am in agreement with Hunt that “one of the great challenges facing African American churches today is developing wholistic approaches to strengthening families.”¹⁴³ Hunt also cited Sociologist Andrew Billingsley’s offering of hope for the future of African American families, that is, for the church to engage in “proactive, visionary approaches that promote family’s preservation.”¹⁴⁴ This is further confirmation that the church should be at the tip of the spear when it comes to transforming individuals, communities, and societies. Through service to and sacrifice for others, we can demonstrate the love of Christ, by feeding and tending to God’s sheep, as Jesus implored Peter to do.¹⁴⁵

Scripture says, “[W]e are accounted as sheep for the slaughter! [Yet], in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”¹⁴⁶ Further, “God has given us a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus.”¹⁴⁷ Thurman suggested that by addressing the “three hounds of hell”—fear, hypocrisy, and hatred—and through love, as demonstrated by Jesus, the disinherited could begin to find a path to survival and hope.¹⁴⁸ “There must be a mutual sense of mutual worth and value, a common humanity, which frees our spirits, making it possible to love. The concept of reverence for personality,

then is applicable between persons from whom, in the initial instance, the heavy weight of status has been sloughed off. Then what? Each person meets the other where he is and there treats him as if he were where he ought to be. Here we emerge into an area where loves operates, revealing a universal characteristic unbounded by special or limited circumstances.”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, when we bestow upon one another dignity and worth, forgiveness and healing become possibilities. Together, we can address the needs of our communities, an effort that can be mutually beneficial and satisfying.

In his book, *Leading Causes of Life: Five Fundamentals to Change the Way You Live Your Life*, Gary Gunderson introduced an enlightening and different perspective. Naturally or normally, I, like most others, would approach this from the opposite side or by the “leading causes of death.” After my exposure to Gunderson, it now seems to me that if we continue to look at it from the leading causes of death, we will be perpetually playing catch-up or playing from behind. Our efforts will perpetually be reactionary. Therefore, if we were to incorporate Gunderson’s approach, many deaths may be prevented. Understanding life with Gunderson’s concepts of connection, coherence, agency, blessing, and hope, we could enhance it, rather than merely trying to prevent death. Deuteronomy 30:19 states, “I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.”¹⁵⁰

The first “leading cause of life” is connections. Humans are communal and social beings. We long to be connected to others, our family, our friends, our coworkers, our church family, and our Creator. We desire inclusion and relationships. Our connections can be life-giving and life-saving. Conversely, hopelessness and loneliness can be detrimental to our health. Along with loneliness, there is emptiness and isolation, which

can exacerbate physical and mental conditions. The ministries that were visited provided a great service in this area helping those in need find social connection.

Secondly, if one's life has no sense of purpose, no sense of meaning, or no sense of hope, there also will be no coherence. Life will have no logical sense of connection or consistency, and it will be a struggle to feel a sense of belonging. This much-needed coherence can come through our connections with others, which provide meaning and gives reason to our existence.

Agency, the third "leading cause of life," enables us to be effective in life, to achieve, and to accomplish. This also helps to provide meaning to our lives. Therefore, the more we strive and achieve, the more meaning is added to our lives. Subsequently, it may also add more connections, which brings even greater coherence.

The fourth and last "leading cause of life" is blessings. Blessings can be mutual in a society. We tend to reap what we sow. If we sow hate, we reap hate. If we sow discontent, we reap discontent. Conversely, if we sow love, we reap love. If we sow contentment, we reap contentment. As is apparent to all, if we sow blessings, we reap blessings.

The leading causes of connection, coherence, agency, and blessings, together can provide one hope. These famous words were attributed to Helen Keller: "Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible!"¹⁵¹ Adam Taylor, author of *Mobilizing Hope: Faith-Inspired Activism for a Post-Civil Rights Generation*, echoed those words, affirming, "Hope is the antidote to fear. Hope enables people to withstand incredible adversity and hold on even in the midst of persecution or seemingly impossible odds. Hope fuels and shapes our vision of a preferred future."¹⁵² The Bible cautions that

works without faith is dead.¹⁵³ Similarly, Taylor suggested, “Activism without hope is like a balloon drained of air; it quickly deflates and loses its ability to rise in the air. Hope is the oxygen that inspires and sustains activism.”¹⁵⁴ I believe hope is indispensable when it comes to effecting change and transformation. “Hope provides the inspirational and motivational bridge from our presently broken reality to a preferred future.”¹⁵⁵

These leading causes of life were embodied at many ministries and service organizations that I have had the great fortune to visit, such as Christ House in Washington, DC; Help for the Homeless in Baltimore, MD; Ames Memorial United Methodist Church, Baltimore, MD; Emory Fellowship United Methodist Church, Washington, DC; Partners in Care, Pasadena, MD; YWCA, Anne Arundel County, MD; and Opportunity Builders, Inc. (OBI), Millersville, MD.

Housing First

A promising program I heard about was “Housing First,” a part of the Help for the Homeless program. I have come to understand that Housing First is a nation-wide initiative to reduce chronic homelessness. Known to be cost effective and leading to long-term success for keeping individuals off the street, Housing First set out to secure timely (or immediate) stable housing for the homeless, rather than having the homeless individuals go through incremental steps. The concept is that once an individual has a stable housing situation, his/her healthcare and other concerns can be addressed through case management. Housing First is a great concept and has achieved great results.

Christ House

The mission of Christ House is to provide comprehensive and compassionate health care to sick and homeless men and women in the District of Columbia, and to

assist them in resolving critical issues in order to break the cycle of homelessness. Christ House was the first 24-hour residential medical facility for the homeless population in the United States. Today, there are only 13 stand-alone residential medical facilities for the homeless like Christ House in all of the U.S. and Canada. Patients are admitted to Christ House from area hospitals, shelters, clinics, and medical outreach projects. They suffer from a variety of illnesses and injuries including cancer, hypertension and stroke, liver disease, kidney failure, diabetes and related amputations, HIV/AIDS, respiratory disease, major lacerations, fractures, and ulcerations of the skin. Many are malnourished, anemic, depressed, and desperately disconnected from healthy sources of support.

Current programming at Christ House includes a broad array of services and activities to provide patients with a complete recovery. Each patient is addressed in a comprehensive and holistic manner. Christ House not only treats the physical problems that bring individuals to Christ House, but also seeks to understand and resolve the underlying issues that may have led to their homelessness. The goal is that patients will leave Christ House stabilized, with the education and tools necessary to manage their health problems.

The Kairos Program at Christ House is a supportive recovery community that provides permanent housing for former Christ House patients who have ongoing medical needs. The success of the Kairos Program is based upon the strong sense of community forged through shared service work and engagement in the twelve-step spiritual recovery program.

Christ House partners with individuals and other organizations for funding. More than 16,400 individuals, churches, foundations, businesses, and other groups have given

money, goods, or volunteer service since our inception. Approximately one-third of the annual Christ House operating budget is underwritten by grants from the federal government and the District of Columbia. The majority of these grants are administered by the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness and the District of Columbia Department of Health, HIV-AIDS, Hepatitis, STD and TB Administration (<http://christhouse.org>).

Partners In Care (PIC) Maryland

Partners In Care (PIC) Maryland provides programs and services that support the independence of older adults by using the time and talents of its members, leadership and staff. PIC offers services in exchange for donated time and talents. Members receive assistance to remain actively involved in the community through transportation and home repair programs, as well as a meaningful social network of care. PIC programs are available for individuals and families, which help to relieve the caregivers, reduce hospital admissions, delay nursing home placements, and provide critical services. PIC programs and services contribute to the safety and wellbeing of their members. The programs operate through a culture of reciprocity. PIC services include:

Member Care is PIC's overall program of person-centered support and advocacy. It promotes economic security, community engagement and volunteerism. Members are provided assistance with completing forms and applications, such as Benefits Check-Up. Assistance is also given for navigation through agencies and institutions to find emergency and long-term resources.

Ride Partners is a transportation program, which provides arm-in-arm rides to take people to medical appointments, pick up prescriptions and groceries, and run other

errands. Volunteer drivers provide the transportation, and gas reimbursement is available.

PIC Up Bus provides affordable, wheel-chair accessible, on-demand transportation. Services include rides to social events and non-emergency medical transportation, and caregivers accompanying riders.

Repairs With Care is a program that helps people maintain their homes for safe and independent living. Repair services include fixing leaking faucets, painting, changing lights, and building hand railings. Members also can request installation service of safety equipment, such as shower seats, toilet risers, and grab bars.

Care Transitions provides support during the transition from hospital or facility back to their home when important details tend to fall through the cracks. Support also is provided for caregivers, including rides for return check-ups, prescription and grocery pick-up, home modifications and reassurance to ease this often-stressful process.

The Boutique is a thrift store that sells upscale resale merchandise, provided through donations, including clothing, jewelry, accessories, books, and furniture. The store generates 30% of the revenue. The Boutique is a thriving social enterprise and microcosm of Partners In Care in action.

Emergency Kits provides essential supplies for sheltering in place. Kits include three days of nutritious food in single-size containers, water, an AM/FM radio, flashlight, batteries, checklists and safety instructions. (www.partnersincare.org)

YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County

YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County offers a variety of programming to meet the social, emotional, educational and recreational needs of members in the greater Annapolis area. YWCA provides services in support of individuals who are

victims of domestic violence, including women, men and children. The services provided range from actual refuge at the domestic violence safe house and a 24-hour hotline, to courses that rehabilitate offenders. In addition, counseling, support groups and legal services are the cornerstone of the YWCA's influence on enabling victims to leave their abusers. YWCA makes valuable resources, such as a 24-hour hotline and hospital accompaniment, available to victims of sexual assault. Such services are the initial response to women and children in crisis. By acting as a support person without judgment, YWCA advocates provide kind assistance and referral information during a time when individuals need understanding and clarity the most.

YWCA also supports the National YWCA initiative to promote economic empowerment and racial justice through programming specifically aimed at these topics. Through the identification of private foundation funding and long standing partnerships, YWCA offers services to ensure educational, professional and financial success. (<http://www.annapolisywca.org>)

Opportunity Builders, Inc.

Opportunity Builders Inc. (OBI) provides vocational training and employment services for adults with developmental disabilities in an environment that promotes personal fulfillment, addresses individual needs, and fosters independence.

OBI provides each individual it serves with a dedicated team of caregivers. This team reviews the individual's vocational goals, the therapies administered, and their overall support plan. However, the individual has a "personal choice" to decide what type of work they like and dream of doing. OBI then helps them find jobs either in their

warehouse setting or in community employment that fits their personality, enabling them to be productive, community citizens.

OBI receives a per diem for each individual they serve from the Developmental Disability Administration (DDA). This funding allows for the operation and maintenance of the basics at the organization, but it is through the community's generosity to their designated funds that OBI is able to develop and advance its programs. OBI has an Annual Fund, which allows unrestricted donations and helps offset OBI's operational expenses. The Endowment Funds are raised through investments in order to help facilitate growth. The Program Fund enables OBI to develop existing programs or create new ones to advance and promote the amazing capabilities and talents at OBI. (www.obeworks.org)

It is in this spirit that today's church must approach the concerns of this age with a wholeness approach. I believe the church can be transformative, and it must be, as Joseph W. Daniels, Jr. wrote in *Begging for REAL Church*,

In many churches today we are more concerned with ritual and routine than we are with helping people at the point of need—whether that need be physical, emotional, mental, relational, financial or spiritual. There is a silent yet resounding cry for “real church”—a space and place where genuine relationships with God and one another can be created so that our dreams, visions and destinies can become realities.¹⁵⁶

Daniels offered what could possibly be an adequate response to Thurman's question, “...an authentic encounter with Jesus will be therapeutic; will bring peace of mind, body and soul; will transform us in ways we need and desire.”¹⁵⁷ According to Daniels, the temple was “the center of community life” and where those in need went to find what they were looking for. “If you were cut off from the temple, you were cut off from

life.”¹⁵⁸ The church of today, therefore, must also be the go-to place as the center of community for abundant life. Daniels further observed:

[M]any of us have been locked out of places of healing and power. Locked out of our families, places of employment, schools, social clubs, associations and/or other places where lasting friendships and healing connections can be formed. And, as a result, we have sought to find help and healing in other places. Places where alcohol replaces authenticity, and unconditional sex replaces unconditional love. Places where greed replaces grace, where putting down replaces lifting up. Places where a quest for material wealth replaces the journey toward true riches. Places where violence replaces understanding, and people have no common faith or community to overcome crises as they arise. And so when you are locked out, where do you go?¹⁵⁹

Daniels insists that “Transformation is possible if we allow ourselves to transparently beg in places that seek to heal in the name of Jesus.”¹⁶⁰ Referring to the Greek word, *sozo*, which means to be healed, to be made complete, to be made whole, Daniels explained that while the root of salvation is spiritual, “we are not complete nor are we whole nor are we saved, unless every aspect of our lives is consistent with the salvation given to us freely by Jesus Christ.”¹⁶¹ To illustrate this, Daniels used the acronym, “WHOLE”:

Well physically

Healed emotionally

Opened and Obedient to the movement of God’s Spirit

Loved unconditionally

Empowered financially

To us this encompasses completeness in this world.”¹⁶²

In the same vein as Thurman, Mark R. Gornik asked in his book, *To Live in Peace*, “In what ways does the narrative of Christ incarnate, crucified, and risen shape the church to enact the gospel of peace amidst the daily heartaches and hardships of the inner city?”¹⁶³

Gornik offers ways to show faith and “God’s new creation” in the inner city. Amongst Gornik’s suggestions are Faith-based initiatives and Community Development Corporations (CDC). These entities can develop housing, create jobs, provide social services, create retail—in other words, they can transform communities. Gornik sees the church as being essential to this effort. The church must be the “good neighbor,” and foment personal, social, and political renewal.¹⁶⁴

Gornik offered the church as Healing Communities where one can find healing, lay down burdens, and discover the restorative power of grace. The church should be a support system for those that have been caught up in a storm, fostering dignity and hope. The Church as Healers and Builders of Community addresses the whole person and the whole community expressing God’s love and justice.

Common activities may include operating credit unions and neighborhood banks; creating, retaining, and attracting jobs; developing and managing housing for families and the elderly; educating children in after school programs and religiously based schools; and providing preventive and primarily health care for the uninsured and underserved.¹⁶⁵

Gornik also offers Churches as Organizers for Just Communities and as leaders of social change. Such efforts are credited with helping to build democratic power, promote social justice, and strengthen public life. Congregations are key agents in mobilizing people on behalf of schools that educate children, wages that sustain families, housing that stabilizes neighborhoods, and public services that maintain communities.¹⁶⁶

Gornik embodied the “Three R’s” of John Perkins: Relocation, Reconciliation, and Redistribution, when Gornik actually moved to Sandtown and served the people there. From his experiences there, he added a fourth R, “Repentance.” Gornik defined

repentance as “not feeling sorry or apologizing, engaging in rituals of regret, but an invitation ‘to open up a new world view...to put an end to business as usual.’”¹⁶⁷ Gornik believes that “To speak of Jesus as the Savior of the world is to speak of him as Redeemer of the city and bearer of good news for the poor. Jesus proclaims, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners.’”¹⁶⁸

In response to Thurman’s question, this is exactly “what in the world that Jesus of Nazareth has to say to the people of today whose backs are against the wall!” What we have to say to those people is this: You are not forgotten. There is hope for you. God has a plan for your life, a plan to prosper you, a plan to give you hope and a future.¹⁶⁹ God has a plan to provide for those who grieve, to give you a crown of beauty instead of ashes, to give you the oil of joy instead of mourning, to give you a garment of praise instead of the spirit of despair. God has a plan to rebuild the ruins of your life. Instead of shame, you will receive a double portion. Instead of disgrace, you will rejoice in your inheritance.¹⁷⁰

An ancient Chinese Proverb attributed to Lao Tzu states, “Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say ‘We have done this ourselves!’”¹⁷¹

(www.goodreads.com/quotes/215411-go-to-the-people-live-with-them-learn-from-them)

An unknown writer wrote, “It is not so much important as to how many years one lives on planet earth but what one's life amounts to! What one accomplishes! How one

positively affects the lives of others! Life is not just about winning but rather about serving, helping, and changing people to fulfill their purpose.”¹⁷²

Scripture encourages us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in strangers, and clothe the naked. “[I]n as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me.”¹⁷³ As such, we are to love our neighbors as though loving ourselves. In the same way, Jesus impressed upon Peter that in loving Jesus, we ought to therefore care for and feed His sheep.¹⁷⁴ By following these tenets, Thurman’s question is answered in our benevolent actions towards one another.

In summary of this chapter, let us recall Dr. King’s discussion about our being “Transformed Nonconformists.” In the sermon of the same name, King painted a beautiful picture of what “transformed nonconformists” can and should be like:

In spite of this prevailing tendency to conform, we as Christians have a mandate to be nonconformists. The Apostle Paul counseled, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”¹⁷⁵ We are called to be people of conviction, not conformity; of moral nobility, not social respectability. We are commanded to live differently and according to a higher loyalty.... When we, through compassionless detachment and arrogant individualism, fail to respond to the needs of the underprivileged, the Master says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” When we allow the spark of revenge in our souls to flame up in hate toward our enemies, Jesus teaches, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Everywhere at all times, the love ethic of Jesus is a radiant light revealing the ugliness of our stale conformity.”¹⁷⁶

With passion and compassion, we can make a difference in the lives of many. This is the Power. This is the Passion. This is the Promise. This is the Purpose we can bring to the concept of Urban Ministry. Let us persevere through our work produced by faith. Let us persevere through our labor prompted by love! Let us persevere through our endurance

inspired by hope. So, let us hold on to our faith. As I have heard said many different ways, faith leads to hope. Hope produces action, and action leads to change.

CHAPTER SIX:

ALTERNATE FUNDING SOURCES

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”¹⁷⁷
(Matt. 6:13 KJV)

As set forth above, funding is one of the primary areas of concern in the paradigm shift of today’s church. There are several avenues for bringing additional funds into a ministry, including Ecclesiastical Entrepreneurism, Christian Entrepreneurism, Business As Mission (BAM), Community Development Corporations (CDC), Faith-Based Federal Grants, and Charitable Giving.

Ecclesiastical Entrepreneurism

Ecclesiastical entrepreneurship describes a model of a for-profit business owned by the church. A church-owned business could generate vital income, which could be used for facilities, salaries, community development, investments, and other high-cost endeavors. This entrepreneurship can take the form of job creator, job training programs, creative arts programs, and no-cost services to congregants, etc. The type of business is only limited by the legality, spirituality, and funding sources. Employees could come from the congregation or the community at large. Examples include government contracting, security detail, car detailing, house cleaning; etc.

Christian Entrepreneurism

While entrepreneurs endeavor to attain wealth, the Christian Entrepreneur endeavors to bring glory to God and be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted him or her with. I define the Christian Entrepreneur as one who is a believer and follower of Jesus the

Christ, and a good steward who has been called to advance the Kingdom of God through entrepreneurial ventures. The Christian Entrepreneur, led by the Spirit of God, brings vital gifts to the church and Body of Christ. Although an entrepreneur seeks to earn profits to keep the business profitable, profits for the sake of profits should not be the goal. Entrepreneurship is integral to the calling of a Christian Entrepreneur. The business is a means to the end of glorifying God and accomplishing His purposes.

Business As Mission (BAM)

Business as mission is seen as a God-given vocation and institution in society, with the potential to bring multiple benefits to people, communities and nations. Business as mission leverages the power of business to address spiritual needs, along with social, and economic needs. It is said to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God is like unto the context of business. The mission engages with the world's more pressing social, economic, environmental and spiritual issues. Alternative terms of BAM include Kingdom business, missional entrepreneurship, transformational business, missional business or business for transformation (B4T), among others. There is no one universally agreed definition of business as mission, but there are some key common denominators in the global BAM movement. This is the working definition used by the BAM Global Think Tank:

Business as Mission is profitable and sustainable businesses; Intentional about Kingdom of God purpose and its impact on people and nations; Focused on holistic transformation and the multiple bottom lines of economic, social, environmental and spiritual outcomes; Concerned about the world's poorest and least evangelized peoples.¹⁷⁸

Business as mission is not a new idea. Business and mission have been combined in different ways, at different times throughout Church history. However, the contemporary

business as mission movement represents a growing intentionality to fully integrate business goals with the call to the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. It is an answer to the prayer, “May Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” People and communities can be positively transformed through for-profit business activities.

This is not “ministry” tacked onto business for convenience or vice versa. Instead, the mission is worked out in and through the business, through its activities, products and services, and relationships. A profitable and sustainable business is able to create new jobs, drive new innovations, increase societal resources, and economic growth. Business can provide goods and services that are vitally needed in underserved communities and can be utilized world-wide.

These activities, products, and relationships are integral to business and part of the God-given potential of business to transform society and glorify God. Through business we can aggressively address poverty, increase the quality of life, bring positive social change and embody the ministry of Jesus the Christ to the least and the lost. (<http://businessasmission.com/get-started/>).

Community Development Corporations

CDCs are separate businesses run by church members. They are non-religious, non-profit, and for low income, underserved communities. These funds are not to be used to proselytize or make disciples, but should be used to help fulfill the vision of the church in revitalizing the local community. In other words these funds are not for doing church work, but their use accomplishes the work of the church. CDCs are useful for affordable housing, health, economic development, and even educational and social service.

The leadership of the community and the goals that are being pursued defines community Development Corporations, such as: job creation and access to affordable housing. These entities are non-profit institutions organized under section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue code, which designates them as tax-exempt, non-profit organizations. This designation is essential so that the institution may receive grants and gifts from both public and private sources.

These community organizations are set up by residents, small business owners, church congregations, members of civic associations, etc. to promote the revitalization of their community. They also provide a host of different social services to residents in need. Community Development Companies need not be certified by any national entity, although some states require them to meet certain criteria in order to receive state funding.

Certified Development Companies are authorized by SBA to market, package and service SBA 504 loans. Based on their shared economic development and job creation goals, a Community Development Corporation may also apply to become an SBA Certified Development Company, as long as it meets SBA's requirements.

Some of the requirements for an organization to operate as a Certified Development Company are:

- Be a non-profit corporation in good standing
- Have at least 25 members representing the following groups:
- Government organizations responsible for economic development in the specific community and acceptable to SBA
- Financial institutions that provide long-term, fixed asset financing in the community where it operates
- Community organizations dedicated to the local economic development
- Businesses located in the area of operation
- Have a board of directors chosen from among the members and representing at least three of the four membership groups

- Meet a minimum level of lending activity

(www.sba.gov/blogs/cdcs-and-cdcs-community-development-corporations-and-sba-certified-development-companies)

Faith-Based Federal Grants

*"The particular faith that motivates each of us can promote a greater good for all of us. Instead of driving us apart, our varied beliefs can bring us together to feed the hungry and comfort the afflicted; to make peace where there is strife and rebuild what has broken; to lift up those who have fallen on hard times."*¹⁷⁹
 -- President Barack Obama

The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships forms partnerships between government and non-profit organizations, both secular and faith-based. Each Center forms partnerships between its agency and faith-based and neighborhood organizations to advance specific goals, for instance, the Department of Labor (DOL) Center forms partnerships between DOL and community-based groups for job training and workforce development programs. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center partners with community-based groups to address disaster response, as another example. Similar efforts are being implemented through Centers at the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Veterans Affairs as well as the Small Business Administration.

The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships also coordinates the President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. This Advisory Council is a group of leaders from both faith-based and secular organizations. (www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/about)

CHAPTER SEVEN:

AGAPE DELIVERANCE MINISTRIES, INC.

“If you feed their bodies, you can feed their minds! If you stimulate their minds, you can touch their hearts! If you have their hearts, you can quicken their spirits! If you focus their eyes, you can inspire their vision! If you empower their hands, you can help shape their future! If you bestow them with love, you will fill them with hope!”-- Reverend Jeffery Gray

“¹⁴I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. ¹⁵My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth”¹⁸⁰ (Psalm 139, KJV). These familiar verses remind us that each of us is made in the image of God and is precious in God’s sight. Although some may have greater access and opportunity than others, we are all God’s children. Unless and until the society recognizes all human beings in this light, we will continue to have those that are considered to be throwaway. All have a right to the abundant life offered by Jesus the Christ. The Declaration of Independence, as well, declares that all men are created equal and are endowed by that same Creator with certain inalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.¹⁸¹ I would have also included the right to dignity. For many, the pursuit of happiness is hindered by abject poverty and the lack of access to the vital resources required for healthy living.

In today’s political and social climate, the lack of resources and access means the lack of a voice. The inability to contribute to society has relegated many to the bottom of the heap and vulnerable to be preyed upon by society. They are used by society as livestock, cash cows, or seed corn, especially by the justice and the for-profit prison

systems. Oftentimes the solutions offered by the government have actually exacerbated the situation. For instance, the welfare program forbade a capable male/father to be in the household. The absence of fathers then led to more and more poverty and delinquency, which resulted in more youths being caught up in the criminal justice system.

A wholeness ministerial approach and social justice are required, in addition to evangelism. Both spiritual and physical needs must be addressed. The whole individual – not just the spiritual man – must be engaged. Other areas that must be considered include medical access, educational access, restorative justice, and environmental justice.

Rather than just praying for people, we must also physically reach out to those that God has entrusted us with. We must take advantage of every opportunity to show them the love of God. Luke 10:37 teaches that “He who showed mercy” was the “neighbor to him who fell among the thieves.”¹⁸² We should now go and do likewise. A wholeness ministry framework has a greater chance of healing those broken by disease, abuse, misuse, and oppression. A wholeness ministry approach can provide release from all types of bondage. It is God’s Spirit that enables us to take God’s wholeness to the world, thereby overcoming many barriers. Sadly, the need greatly outpaces the resources of any one entity, especially a church.

1 Corinthians 12:20 states “Yes, there are many parts, but only one body.”¹⁸³ Just the same, humanity is made up of many members, but we are one. No member is any less of a member of humanity than any other member. A wholeness ministry seeks to address the needs of the whole, as well as, the individual parts that make up the whole. 1 Corinthians goes on to say that when the weaker or less honorable member is bestowed a more abundant honor, it becomes much more presentable. Therefore, if one member

suffers, all members suffer with that member. Consequently, when one member rejoices, all members rejoice with that member.¹⁸⁴

The ultimate goal, therefore, is to seek healing for every part of the whole through a wholeness ministry framework. Healing for the incarcerated, those sick and/or shut in, members of broken families. Healing and reconciliation for the community. With the church leading the way, displaying the incarnation of Christ, there is a greater chance that someone may seek salvation as well. Someone may ask, “What must I do to be saved?”¹⁸⁵ Because we will seek wholeness, rather than mere conversion, we will precipitate an encounter with God that may lead to a more abundant life. We will show the love of God. If they hunger, let us feed them. If they are naked, let us clothe them. If they thirst, let us give them drink. If they are shut in, let us visit them. If they are captives, let us set them free, for “whom the Son sets free, is free indeed.”¹⁸⁶

In *Church Alive: Comparing Church Work With the Work of the Church*, Harold Trammel offered,

In the Christian life we have a goal. The Christian is not an unconcerned stroller along the byways of life; he is a wayfarer on the high road. He is not a tourist who returns each night to the place from which he starts; he is a pilgrim who is forever on the way. The goal is nothing less than the likeness of Christ. The Christian life is going somewhere, and it would be well if, at each day's ending, we were to ask ourselves; “Am I any farther down the path?”¹⁸⁷

It is for this very same goal that the Agape Deliverance Ministries was conceived. The Agape Deliverance Ministries, Inc.'s vision, mission, and doctrine were founded upon and are sustained by the teachings of Jesus the Christ and according to the Law of Love. Agape, the Greek word for love, is a love of the will, rather than emotion. Agape love seeks no reciprocity and leads to deliverance, which is the action of being rescued or set free.¹⁸⁸

John 13:35 states, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹⁸⁹

New Testament Agape Scripture References	
John 17:26	- And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. (KJV) [God’s love for Christ]
John 3:16	- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (KJV) [God’s love for man]
Romans 5:8	- But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (KJV) [God’s love for man]
John 14:21	- He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (KJV) [God’s love for believers]
John 13:34	- A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (KJV) [Believer’s love for other believers]
1 Corinthians 16:14	- Let all your things be done with charity. (KJV) [Man’s love for fellowman]
1 Thessalonians 3:12	- And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: (KJV) [Man’s love for fellowman]
2 Peter 1:7	- And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. (KJV) [Man’s love for fellowman]

TABLE 4. NT Agape Scripture References

We have been transformed to be transformers; blessed to be a blessing; forgiven, that we may forgive; given love to give love. Love is transforming. So are sacrifice, service, faith, and prayer. A transformed Apostle Paul wrote, “Three things will last

forever—faith, hope, and love—but, the greatest of these is love.”¹⁹⁰ Love is the more excellent way! Jesus gave us two commandments: “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁹¹

The question for me is whether the church is doing all it can to be a good neighbor to the community at large. Or, how should the church be called upon to be a better partner with the neighborhood? Trammel’s book, *Church Alive*, sets out to differentiate between what is “church work” and what is the “work of the church.”¹⁹² As a feature of his Church Alive Institute, Trammel asked participants to populate two pie charts. One pie chart was populated with slices of church work (auxiliaries of the church). The second pie chart was populated with slices of the work of the Church (societal concerns). Church work slices included Deacons, Trustees, Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Ushers, Choirs, Bible Study, Sunday School, Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry, Children’s Ministry, etc. The work of the Church slices included: Homelessness, Infant Mortality, Racism, Pornography, Teen Pregnancy, Teen Suicide, Unemployment, Welfare Increase, Anxiety/Depression, Divorce, HIV/Aids, Cults, Broken Relationships, Crime/Violence, Spousal Abuse, Child Abuse, No Gun Control, Teen Gangs, etc. Trammel’s question hinged upon what, if anything, the activities of the first pie chart did that addressed the concerns of the second pie chart. If we are truly honest, we should see that the first pie chart does very little to directly address the concerns of the second pie chart.

Agape Deliverance Ministries, Inc. endeavors to build and grow a ministry whose very existence is to address and reduce the concerns of the second pie chart. May we never

get so caught up in Church services that we neglect to administer to the needs of the people that make up the Church?

The Agape Deliverance Ministries' Vision

“To See the Deliverance of God for All Mankind, Transformed and Empowered to Serve.”

In his book, *Beyond Charity*, John Perkins stated, “And unless we ourselves have experienced transforming love of God personally, we cannot expect God’s love to transform others.”¹⁹³ We seek to transform the lives of the lost by sharing the Gospel of Jesus the Christ and the love of God. If we merely spewed scripture without love and compassion, we would just be making noise with no discernable results, other than fostering division and alienation.

The Agape Deliverance Ministries' Mission:

“The Agape Deliverance Ministries of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, empowered by the Spirit of God, will follow Christ’s mandate to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison and is committed to the development of spiritual lives through prayer, worship, and biblical teachings towards the formation of a beloved community, where our members are engaged in outreach and hospitality to all people.”

The Agape Deliverance Ministries' Symbol:

The Agape Deliverance Ministry, Inc. symbol is a combination of the cross, an anchor, and a heart. The cross symbolizes faith; the anchor, hope; and the heart, love. This is to reflect 1 Corinthians 13:13, “Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”¹⁹⁴



FIGURE 1. Agape Deliverance Ministries' Cross-Anchor-Heart Symbol

Agape utilized the services of the StartRIGHT Program, which is an Internet-based church planting program of StartCHURCH. StartCHURCH is a consulting company that provides legal resources and consultation to religious and non-profit organizations. It focuses on church management and legal/IRS compliance. Services that StartCHURH provide included:

- Searched state records for the availability of the name “Agape Deliverance Ministries”
- Filed Agape Deliverance Ministries for incorporation within the State of Maryland
- Secured Agape Deliverance Ministries Tax-ID Number
- Provided template for first board meeting
- Provided a customized set of constitution and bylaws based on our doctrine and vision and other information we provided them (used to ratify corporate paperwork)

- Created a conflict of interest policy, a compensation policy, and a reimbursement policy
- Prepared application, filed with IRS for non-profit status, and handled all follow up questions and inquiries from the IRS

Within a month of contacting StartCHURH and paying required fees, Agape Deliverance Ministries submitted an application for incorporation with the State of Maryland. We had a vision, a mission, as well as a constitution and bylaws. Within four months we were incorporated. And, within six months, we had attained non-profit status through the IRS.

Agape Deliverance Ministries, Inc.'s long-term goals include:

- Started Bible Study Thursday, January 15th 2015
- Formed a quartet gospel singing group called, "Beautiful Feet"
- Sunday Services, TBD (searching for an adequate location)
- Sponsoring a county-wide gospel choir
- Joining the Prince George's County Baptist Association
- Form a Community Development Corporation (CDC)
- Form For-Profit Entity (government contracting, franchising, commercial entities) for job creation, job training, community development
- Investments to build community (affordable housing, job training, healthy food access, etc.)
- Partnerships with the community:
 - Adopt Schools (After school and weekend food programs)
 - YWCA of Anne Arundel County for domestic violence
 - Partners In Care to assist our seniors

- Arts Council of Anne Arundel County for youths to have access to the arts
- Youth Court and Prisons
- Prison Pastoral Care
- Hospital Pastoral Care
- Elder Care Facilities Pastoral Care

Agape Development Ministries' Wholeness Ministry Framework:

I. Proactive/Preventive Ministry

- Foster economic development in depressed communities (local, county, state, federal, commercial)
- Provide direct job development and employment placement programs (partner with government and corporations)
- Partner with other organizations to provide resources and job opportunities
- Provide job and skill training and enhancement for various careers and occupations
- Provide life and social skills training (e.g., anger management, conflict resolution, violence prevention)
- Provide long-term relationships with an ongoing program, not just days or weeks
- Provide educational assistance with tutoring and remedial classes (e.g., Diploma, GED)
- Provide financial literacy program (e.g., check books, banking, home buying)
- Treat substance abuse as a health issue rather than a crime
- Treat prostitutes and those in sex trafficking as victims rather than criminals

- Provide social services, health services, and health fairs, to include mental and dental health, through community health clinics for greater access and fitness
- Make available mental, spiritual, and physical counseling with the ability to make referrals for professional clinical evaluations
- Provide individual debt reduction programs (freedom from wage slavery or economic exploitation)
- Form a reentry program for returning citizens (restorative justice program)
- Advocate for restorative justice sentencing when and where feasible that engages the justice system, the incarcerated, their families, and the community, which includes aspects of redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration

II. Presence Ministry

- Develop a real school of learning within the prison with real goals
- Develop a childcare/youth program for the children of inmates
- Regular and routine ministerial visitations and counseling to prisons, hospitals, and elder care facilities
- Develop a returning citizen mentoring program in preparation for return to citizenship

III. Proclamation

- Display the incarnation of Jesus the Christ, the eternal Word, the Son of God that became flesh and is the center of Christian doctrine and truth

- Express the Doctrine of Humanity, that we all were made in the image of God.
“God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).
- Express the Doctrine of Ecclesiology, highlighting the role of the church in the life and salvation of God’s children
- Share the Gospel of Jesus the Christ, the Good News that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life
- Provide worship services and bible studies

IV. Pastoral Care Ministry

- Pastoral care and counseling for those in prison, hospital, hospice, and elder care facilities
- Provide care for dying inmates, those in prison hospice, those in the sick wards, and the homeless
- Provide bereavement services

V. Policy Action

- Advocate for the restoration of citizenship of former inmates upon return and the payment of debt to society (retributive justice)
- Advocate for the restoration of voting rights of returning citizens that have paid their debt to society
- Lead on the fight for the abolition of mandatory minimums
- Lead on the fight for the reformation of prosecutorial and judicial discretions that have led to prejudicial prosecutions directed predominately towards certain races

- Fight for economic development and job creation in depressed areas
- Advocate on behalf of the mentally challenged
- Lead in organizing churches on a grand scale to speak out with one voice and fight against the profit-producing mass incarceration

We want Agape to be the type of church that Charles Marsh and John Perkins wrote about in their book *Welcoming Justice, God's Movement Toward Beloved Community*. We need to be out amongst the community, applying Perkins' "three R's" of community building: relocation, redistribution, and reconciliation.¹⁹⁵ Relocation is being an active member of the community, with the redistribution of wealth into the community, and reconciliation one with another. We strive to do more than treat symptoms. We need to speak truth to power, provide faith-based activism, and effect change by connecting our gospel to human needs and causes. Marsh and Perkins see the church as still being the one source of forgiveness and reconciliation in this world.

While in Montgomery, AL, Dr. King argued that boycotts were not a goal in and of themselves. "The end is reconciliation, the end is redemption. The end is the creation of the beloved community."¹⁹⁶ The goal is that the pursuit of civil rights would be part of a larger spiritual journey in which people divided by centuries of oppression and hatred might come to live together peaceably in a beloved community.¹⁹⁷

I submit that we cannot get to the beloved community by way of the civil rights movement as the classic struggle between black and white. The civil rights movement can no longer be a black and white matter – it must be a human rights matter; an economical rights matter; an environmental rights matter; a labor and living wage rights

matter. The movement for civil rights must return to its roots as a movement of God. It must be a movement that includes all of us that have been marginalized and denied the basic justice and basic dignity due all of God's children.

Marsh believed that the civil rights movement fell short or lost its way because it ceased to be the movement of God it started out as. The movement that King led was a movement of God that was inclusive of all of God's children. Take for instance the organization SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.¹⁹⁸ An organization that empowered many and accomplished some great things, SNCC evolved into a more militant enterprise. It purged itself of other races, proclaiming Black Power. If misused, Black Power is just as evil as White Power. You can't replace one evil with another and expect a greater and better outcome.

We must be transformed by and reconciled with God. And when we are transformed and reconciled with God, we can be reconciled one to the other. When we are transformed and reconciled by God, then we will be able to transform our homes. When we are transformed and reconciled by God, we will be able to transform our communities. We will be able to transform our cities, our states, our country, and our world, thereby bringing about the beloved community. That is, if we "...be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of our minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."¹⁹⁹

Unless we are transformed and until we are reconciled one with the other from the ravages an ongoing effects of slavery! Unless we are transformed and until we are reconciled one with the other from the ongoing effects, devastation, and division of civil war! Unless we are transformed and until we are reconciled one with the other from the

crippling affects of infinite wars of choice that saps the lifeblood and treasure of our country, leaving the most vulnerable in its wake, we are headed for mutual destruction! Unless and until we do so, the beloved community will only be a lovely vision out on the horizon, beyond our reach.

In his *Beloved Community, How Faith Shapes Social Justice, From The Civil Rights Movement To Today*, Marsh described how Dr. King “emerged from Birmingham with a single-minded theme, the transformative power of love,” “the weapon of love,” “the weapon of compassion,” and “understanding for those who hate us,” and “the truth of the real God.”²⁰⁰ Marsh posits that God is on the side of truth, love, and justice and the church should not be concerned for individual salvation alone, but also redemptive community.

Isaiah 58 tells us the type of sacrifice God wants from us: Set the captives free. Feed the hungry. Give shelter to the homeless. Clothe the naked. Stop pointing fingers and spreading vicious rumors. Then our light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around us will be as bright as noon. Then our salvation will come like the dawn, and our wounds will quickly heal. Our godliness will lead us forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect us from behind. Then when we call, the Lord will answer: “Yes, I am here.” The Lord will guide us continually, giving us water when we are dry and restoring our strength. Some of us shall rebuild the deserted ruins of our cities.²⁰¹ Psalms 127:1 says, “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”²⁰² Except the Lord build this movement, our struggle will also be in vain!

With a bottom-up theological perspective as advocated by Ronald E. Peters in his book, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction*, we can place value upon those of us that have been most marginalized, socially, economically, and politically. The bottom-up perspective reflects compassion, justice, and a concern for those that are victimized educationally, ethnically, culturally, physically, and spiritually.²⁰³ Peter's core values are reflected in Scripture as theism, love, justice, community, creativity, reconciliation, and hope. This love is agape love, "understanding, redeeming good will for all men, love in action, seeking to preserve and create community."²⁰⁴

Finally, I am inspired by the words of Rudy Rasmus in his book, *Touch: Pressing Against the Wounds of a Broken World*. He describes the poignant suffering of the least in our communities, reflecting "I realized that it wasn't just a good thing to reach out to the marginalized—I had to defend their right to be here."²⁰⁵ To show authentic love and acceptance to all of God's people must surely be our goal. My goal is to provide Anne Arundel County, MD, a ministry that, in Rasmus' words, provides the touch that can transform lives, transform a church, transform a community, and transform the world. We have been transformed to be transformers.

APPENDIX #1

Anne Arundel County Demographics

Following are demographics for Anne Arundel County, Maryland from the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Center's (MACHC) Institute for Community Health Center Performance. The county is a very well to do county. According to the demographics, there are approximately 23,259 individuals under 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) out of 494,967, with a poverty rate of 5.3%. Most individuals fall within the 18-44 age group with 192,426 individuals. Followed by the 45-64 age group with 139,841 individuals. There is a median household income of \$80,402. The county is 50% female and 50% male. Racially, whites are the overwhelming majority with 398,726 individuals, followed by Blacks with 74,518. The county is well educated with 306,973 individuals with a high school diploma, college and higher degrees.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND



DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Population: 512,154

Race and Ethnicity

White: 398,726

Black or African American: 74,518

American Indian and Alaska Native: 1,199

Asian: 15,687

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 76

Some other race: 7,249

Two or more races: 14,699

Not Hispanic or Latino: 490,761

Hispanic or Latino: 21,393

Gender

Male: 254,218

Female: 257,936

Age Group Breakout

Under Age 5: 34,029

5-17 years: 89,913

18-44 years: 192,426

45-64 years: 139,841

65 years or Older: 55,945

Poverty and Income

Total Population for Whom Poverty Status Was Determined: 494,967

Population Under 100% FPL: 23,259

101-Under 200% FPL: 41,014

Above 200% FPL : 430,694

Total Households: 188,874

Number of Households with Annual Income under \$20,000: 14,451

Households between \$20,000 - \$44,999: 29,391

Households between \$45,000 - \$59,999: 20,831

Households between \$60,000 - \$99,999: 53,875

Households \$100,000 or above: 70,326

Median Household Income: \$80,402

Language – Linguistically Isolated Households

Spanish: Linguistically Isolated: 1,298

Other Indo-European languages: Linguistically Isolated: 630

Asian and Pacific Island languages: Linguistically Isolated: 1,044

Other languages: Linguistically Isolated: 0

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND



Total Households Linguistically Isolated: 2972

Education Attainment for Population ages 25 years or Older

Pop. Over 25 years: 340917

Less Than High School: 33944

High School Diploma or Equivalency: 98244

Some College: 69297

Associates Degree: 22784

Bachelor's Degree: 66746

Master's Degree: 36877

Professional Degree or Doctorate: 13025

VITAL STATISTICS

Age Adjusted Death Rate For Leading Causes of Death (per 100,000) 1999-2007 Trends

	2007-2005	2005-2003	2003-2001	2001-1999
All Causes of Death	821	826.6	871.8	915.2
Diseases of the Heart	209.4	211.9	243.3	265.5
Malignant Neoplasms	200.5	197.4	206.4	216.1
Cerebrovascular Disease	49.1	57.1	59.1	67.1
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	42.8	44.8	47	49.5
Diabetes Mellitus	24.8	29.8	30	27.8
Accidents	22.9	23.7	23.3	21
Influenza and Pneumonia	22	24	23.3	21
Septicemia	15	16.6	20	20.6
Alzheimer's	21.3	20.6	22.1	20.4
Nephritis, Nephrosis and Nephrotic Syndrome	13.1	12.3	NA	NA
Assault (Homicide)	4.8	4.6	NA	NA
HIV	****	****	****	****
Suicide	10	9.4	NA	NA

Infant Mortality 2008

	Infant Mortality - Fetal Deaths	Infant Mortality Rates
All Races	62	8.7
WHITE	39	7.1
BLACK	22	17.3
HISPANIC	2	****

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

*Low-Birth Weight Births 2008*

	Number of Births That Were Low Birth Weight	Percentage of Births that Were Low Birth Weight
All Races	656	9.2
WHITE	39	7.1
BLACK*	184	14.5
HISPANIC	2	****

BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

The following data is for the population 18 years of age and older.

Response	Weighted Estimate	Percentage	Confidence Interval +/-
HEALTH STATUS: HOW IS YOUR HEALTH IN GENERAL?			
EXCELLENT	90,416	24%	2.06
VERY GOOD	143,172	37.9%	2.34
GOOD	97,869	25.9%	2.11
FAIR	34,174	9.1%	1.39
POOR	11,836	3.1%	0.84

CHRONIC DISEASES

Response	Weighted Estimate	Percentage	Confidence Interval +/-
CARDIOVASCULAR: HAS A DR EVER TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAD A HEART ATTACK?			
YES	15,494	4.2%	1.05
CARDIOVASCULAR: HAS A DR EVER TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAD A STROKE?			
YES	9,930	2.7%	0.85
CHOLESTEROL: EVER BEEN TOLD BY A DOCTOR OR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL THAT YOUR BLOOD CHOLESTEROL IS HIGH?			
YES	105,708	34.5%	3.12
HYPERTENSION: EVER BEEN TOLD BY A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL THAT YOU HAD HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?			
YES	101,959	27.6%	2.5

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

**DIABETES: EVER TOLD BY A DOCTOR THAT YOU HAVE DIABETES?**

YES	31,007	8.2%	1.32
YES BUT FEMALE TOLD DURING PREGNANCY	4,685	1.2%	0.52
NO BORDERLINE DIABETES	3,109	0.8%	0.43

BEHAVIORS/LIFESTYLE INDICATORS

Response	Weighted Estimate	Percentage	Confidence Interval +/-
TOBACCO: CURRENT SMOKER (SMOKED AT LEAST 100 CIGARETTES IN THEIR LIFETIME AND CURRENTLY SMOKING)			
YES	72,771	19.3%	1.9
NO	305,173	80.7%	1.9

ALCOHOL: BINGE DRINKING-FIVE OR MORE DRINKS ON ONE OCCASION IN THE PAST MONTH

YES	61653	16.5%	1.8
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WEIGHT CONTROL: WEIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON BODY MASS INDEX

NOT OVERWEIGHT/OBESE (BMI<=24.9)	143,765	39.6%	2.41
OVERWEIGHT (BMI 25.0 - 29.9)	130,531	36%	2.37
OBESE (BMI 30.0 AND ABOVE)	88,349	24.4%	2.12

MENTAL HEALTH

Response	Weighted Estimate	Percentage	Confidence Interval +/-
DEPRESSION: HAS A DOCTOR EVER TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAVE A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER (INCLUDING DEPRESSION MAJOR DEPRESSION DYSTHYMIA OR MINOR DEPRESSION)?			
YES	13,744	15.5%	3.69
ANXIETY: HAS A DOCTOR EVER TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAD AN ANXIETY DISORDER (INCLUDING ACUTE STRESS ANXIETY OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE PANIC PHOBIA PTSD OR SOCIAL ANXIETY)?			
YES	10,978	12.4%	3.36

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND



ORAL HEALTH

Response	Weighted Estimate	Percentage	Confidence Interval +/-
ORAL HEALTH: HOW LONG SINCE LAST TEETH CLEANING?			
NEVER	0	0%	0
< 1 YEAR	162,761	79.8%	2.31
1 - < 2 YEARS	19,444	9.5%	1.69
2 TO < 5 YEARS	11,633	5.7%	1.33
>= 5 YEARS	010,216	5%	1.25

PREVENTATIVE CARE/TESTING

Response	Weighted Estimate	Percentage	Confidence Interval +/-
IMMUNIZATION: DURING THE PAST YEAR HAVE YOU HAD A FLU SHOT?			
YES	142,764	37.9%	2.34
NO	233,818	62.1%	2.34
WOMENS HEALTH: EVER HAD A MAMMOGRAM? WOMEN AGE 40 AND OVER.			
DID NOT HAVE EXAM	9,768	7.9%	3.26
HAD EXAM	113,644	92.1%	3.26
HIV/AIDS: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TESTED FOR HIV?			
YES	144,727	49.1%	2.84
NO	149,830	50.9%	2.84

SOURCES

Demographics

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007 except for the following counties: Caroline, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, and Worcester. For these counties the demographic data source is the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census. 2007 ACS or other qualified data source was not available in more recent years for these geographies.

Vital Statistics

Age-Adjusted Death Rates: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Vital Statistics reports, 2007, 2005, 2003, and 2001.

Infant Mortality and Birth Weight Data: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Vital Statistics reports, 2008, Preliminary report.

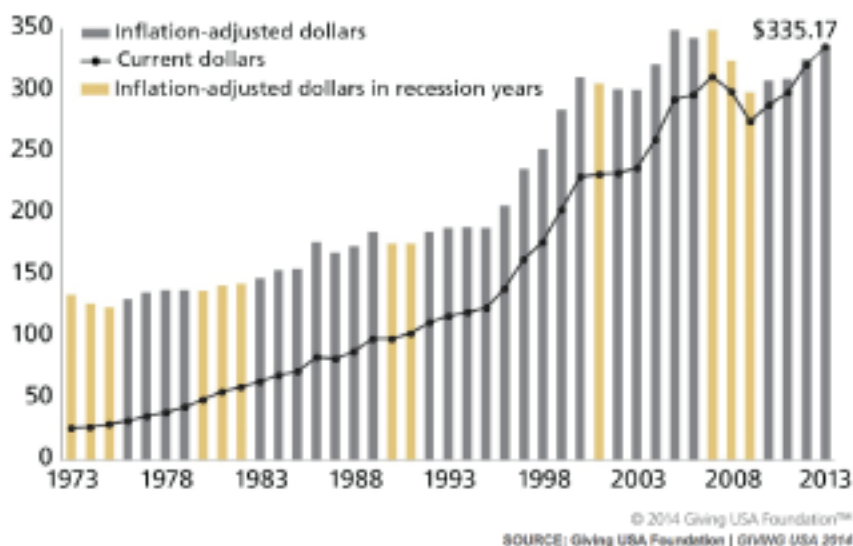
Vital Statistics Reports Available at <http://vsa.maryland.gov/>

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Maryland Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Five year pooled data 1998-2008, Available at <http://www.marylandbrfss.org/cgi-bin/broker>

APPENDIX #2

Philanthropy and Charitable Giving Statistics:



Individual and Family Philanthropy

- 95.4% of households give to charity.¹
- The average annual household contribution is \$2,974.¹
- Americans gave \$335.17 billion in 2013. This reflects a 4.4% increase from 2011.²
- Corporate giving held steady in 2013 at \$16.76 billion.²
- Foundation giving increased in 2013 to \$50.28 billion--a 5.7% increase from 2011.⁴
- In 2013, the largest source of charitable giving came from individuals at \$241.32 billion, or 72% of total giving; followed by foundations (\$50.28 billion/15%), bequests (\$26.81 billion/8%), and corporations (\$16.76 billion/5%).²
- In 2013, the majority of charitable dollars went to religion (31%), education (16%), human services (12%), and grantmaking foundations (11%).²
- Education experienced the largest giving increase in 2013, receiving 8.9% more than the previous year.²
- Charitable giving accounted for 2% of gross domestic product in 2013.²
- Historically, charitable giving rises about one-third as fast as the stock market.³
- It is estimated that between \$6.6 trillion and \$27.4 trillion in charitable bequests will be made between 1998-2052.⁵
- It is estimated total charitable contributions will total between \$21.2 to \$55.4 trillion in between 1998-2052.⁵
- By the year 2055, some \$41 trillion will change hands as Americans pass on their accumulated assets to the next generation.⁵
- 95% of high net worth households give to charity.⁶
- 62% of high net worth donors cite “giving back to the community” as a chief motivation for giving.⁶

- Last year, the greatest percentage of high net worth households gave to educational (80 percent) and basic needs (79 percent) organizations, followed by 69% to the arts, 65% to health related organizations, and 65% to religious organizations.⁶
- In 2013, 100 of the largest charities reported receiving 13% more in online donations, and 25 of these charities collected more than \$10 million each in 2013 from online gifts.⁷

Charitable Organizations: the tax-exempt sector

- In 2013, there were approximately 1,536,084 charitable organizations in the United States.⁹
- There are an estimated 321,839 congregations in the United States in July 2014.⁹
- In 2012, public charities reported over \$1.65 trillion in total revenues, \$1.57 trillion in total expenses, and over \$3 trillion in total assets.⁹
- 62% of tax-exempt organizations that filed a tax return in 2009 had assets under \$100,000 with cumulative revenue of \$32.3 billion.⁹
- Tax-exempt organizations with assets over \$100 million make up 0.4% of the sector and reported revenue of \$1.1 trillion in 2009.⁹
- Sources of revenue for tax-exempt organizations in 2012 were program service revenues, including government contracts and fees (73%), contributions, gifts, & government grants (21%) and lastly, dues, special event income, rental income and net sales from goods (6%).⁹
- There were 86,192 foundations in the United States in 2012, a 5.3% increase from 2011.³
- In 2010, nonprofits accounted for 9.2% of all wages and salaries paid in the United States.⁹

Online Giving

- In 2013, Online giving grew by 13.5%, while overall charitable giving grew by 4.9%.¹⁷
- Of all charitable giving in 2013, online giving accounted for 6.4%.¹⁷
- Small nonprofits grew their online giving the most.¹⁷
- Faith-based nonprofits had the biggest increase in online giving.¹⁷

Volunteering (Individuals)

- 64.5 million adults volunteered 7.9 billion hours of service, worth an estimated value of \$175 billion.¹¹
- The estimated dollar value of volunteer time is \$22.55 per hour for 2013.¹²
- The top four national volunteer activities are fundraising or selling items to raise money (25.7%), food collection or distribution (23.8%), general labor or transportation (19.8%), and tutoring or teaching (17.9%).¹³
- The top four volunteer areas are for religious (34.2%), educational (26.5%), social service (14.4%), and health (8.0%) organizations.¹³

Donor-Advised Funds

- There were 201,631 donor-advised fund accounts in 2012.¹⁴
- Donor-advised funds held \$45.35 billion in assets in 2012.¹⁴

- Annual contributions into donor-advised funds were \$13.71 billion in 2012.¹⁴
- Donors recommended grants from donor-advised funds totaling \$8.62 billion to charities in 2012.¹⁴
- Average donor-advised fund account size was \$224,921 in 2012.¹⁴

Supporting Organizations

- There are more than 57,000 Supporting Organizations operating in the United States.¹⁵
- Supporting organizations have combined total assets of \$76-billion.¹⁶

Other Charitable Giving Vehicles

- There were 91,244 Charitable Remainder Unitrusts with total assets of \$85.2 billion in 2012.¹⁶
- There were 14,616 Charitable Remainder Annuity Trusts with total assets of \$6.4 billion in 2012.¹⁶
- There were 6,498 Charitable Lead Trusts with total assets of \$23.7 billion in 2012.¹⁶
- There were 1,324 Pooled Income Funds with total assets of \$1.25 billion in 2012.¹⁶

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The Charitable Giving Report, derived from The Blackbaud Index

(www.nptrust.org/philanthropic-resources/charitable-giving-statistics/)

APPENDIX #3

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND REPORT

Q1

Do you believe Christians are mandated by God to tithe (10%)?

Yes	49	71.01%
No	20	28.99%

Total	69	
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Mean	1.29
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.46
---------------	------

Variance	0.21
----------	------

Q2

Do you tithe (10%)?

Yes	41	58.57%
No	29	41.43%

Total	70	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.41
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.50
---------------	------

Variance	0.25
----------	------

Q3

Do you give less than 10%?

Yes	32	47.06%
No	36	52.94%

Total	68	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.53
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.50
---------------	------

Variance	0.25
----------	------

Q4

Do you give more than 10%?

Yes	33	48.53%
No	35	51.47%

Total	68	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.51
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.50
---------------	------

Variance	0.25
----------	------

Q5

Do you know the difference between an offering and a tithe?

Yes	67	95.71%
No	3	4.29%
Total	70	

Mean	1.04
Standard Dev.	0.20
Variance	0.04

Q6

Do you give expecting a return in kind from God?

Yes	11	16.42%
No	56	83.58%
Total	67	

Mean	1.84
Standard Dev.	0.37
Variance	0.14

Q7

Do you believe a tithe leads to special blessings from God?

Yes	43	61.43%
No	27	38.57%
Total	70	

Mean	1.39
Standard Dev.	0.49
Variance	0.24

Q8

Do you believe in the Law/Principle of Sowing and Reaping?

Yes	68	98.55%
No	1	1.45%
Total	69	

Mean	1.01
Standard Dev.	0.12
Variance	0.01

Q9

Do you believe that tithing also includes your time and talent?

Yes	57	83.82%
No	11	16.18%

Total	68	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.16
Standard Dev.	0.37
Variance	0.14

Q10

Should there be a separation between church and state?

Yes	50	74.63%
No	17	25.37%

Total	67	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.25
Standard Dev.	0.44
Variance	0.19

Q11

How long have you been a member of your current church?

One to three years?	9	13.24%
Four to Six years?	6	8.82%
Seven or more years?	53	77.94%

Total	68	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	2.65
Standard Dev.	0.71
Variance	0.50

Q12

Is it the responsibility of the church to speak truth to power?

Yes	65	95.59%
No	3	4.41%

Total	68	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.04
Standard Dev.	0.21

Variance	0.04
----------	------

Q13

Do you serve in a ministry?

Yes	59	85.51%
No	10	14.49%

Total	69
--------------	-----------

Mean	1.14
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.35
---------------	------

Variance	0.13
----------	------

Q14

Are churches today making a difference in people's lives?

Yes	58	85.29%
No	10	14.71%

Total	68
--------------	-----------

Mean	1.15
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.36
---------------	------

Variance	0.13
----------	------

Q15

Should churches be more involved in community development?

Yes	69	100.00%
No	0	0.00%

Total	69
--------------	-----------

Mean	1.00
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.00
---------------	------

Variance	0.00
----------	------

Q16

Should churches be involved in social and political issues?

Yes	50	72.46%
No	19	27.54%

Total	69
--------------	-----------

Mean	1.28
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.45
---------------	------

Variance	0.20
----------	------

Q17

Is it feasible for churches to be job creators?

Yes	59	85.51%
No	10	14.49%

Total	69	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.14
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.35
---------------	------

Variance	0.13
----------	------

Q18

Should churches take faith-based funds from the government?

Yes	45	66.18%
No	23	33.82%

Total	68	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.34
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.48
---------------	------

Variance	0.23
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Q19

Is it permissible for churches to have a for-profit business to be used for feeding the hungry, affordable housing, community development, etc.?

Yes	50	73.53%
No	18	26.47%

Total	68	
--------------	-----------	--

Mean	1.26
------	------

Standard Dev.	0.44
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Variance	0.20
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- ¹⁷⁷ Mat. 6:13 (KJV).
- ¹⁷⁸ Business As Mission Global Think Tank Business As Mission definition.
- ¹⁷⁹ President Barack Obama quote IRT Office of Faith-based partnerships.
- ¹⁸⁰ Psa. 139:14-5 (KJV).
- ¹⁸¹ The Declaration of Independence is the usual name of a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies, then at war with Great Britain, regarded themselves as thirteen newly independent sovereign states, and no longer a part of the British Empire.
- ¹⁸² Luke 10:37 (KJV).
- ¹⁸³ 1 Cor. 12:20 (KJV).
- ¹⁸⁴ 1 Cor. 12:26 (KJV).
- ¹⁸⁵ Acts 16:30-1 (KJV).
- ¹⁸⁶ John 8:36 (KJV).
- ¹⁸⁷ Harold Trammel, *Church Alive*, (Pennsylvania: Treasure House, 1994) 46.
- ¹⁸⁸ Herbert Lockyer, Sr., *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 23.
- ¹⁸⁹ John 13:35 (KJV).
- ¹⁹⁰ 1 Cor. 13:13 (KJV).
- ¹⁹¹ Luke 10:27 (KJV).
- ¹⁹² Harold Trammel, *Church Alive*, (Pennsylvania: Treasure House, 1994) 142-4.
- ¹⁹³ John Perkins, *Beyond Charity*, (Michigan: Baker Books, 1993), 58.

¹⁹⁴ 1 Cor. 13:13 (KJV).

¹⁹⁵ Charles Marsh and John Perkins, *Welcoming Justice*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 27-31.

¹⁹⁶ Adam Taylor, *Mobilizing Hope*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 142.

¹⁹⁷ Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community*, (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 1.

¹⁹⁸ The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was an organization of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s that emerged from a student meeting organized by Ella Baker at Shaw University in April 1960.

¹⁹⁹ Rom. 12:2 (KJV).

²⁰⁰ Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community*, (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 38-9.

²⁰¹ Isa. 58 (KJV).

²⁰² Psa. 127:1 (KJV).

²⁰³ Ronald Peters, *Urban Ministry*, (Nashville: Abington Press, 2007), 71.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁰⁵ Rudy Rasmus, *Touch*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 8.