Radiating Resilience: The Practical Theology of the Nameless Women Participants of the Civil Rights Movement

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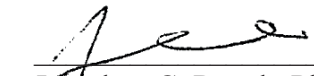

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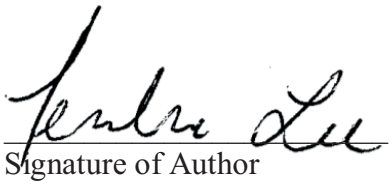

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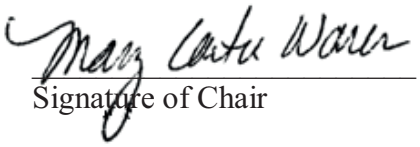

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Abstract

This dissertation articulates a practical theology of resilience of African American women that were raised in the United States during the 1950's and 1960's during a time that is commonly known as the Civil Rights Movement. The inquiry into tools and resources utilized and developed during their life displays their understanding and application of their Christian faith.

Keywords: Theology, African American studies, civil rights movement, women

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I'd like to acknowledge and thank the amazing women that took time from their lives to sit with me and interview. Your voices are important, and your wisdom has forever changed me. Thank you. Thank you to my committee members. My family and friends that encouraged and uplifted me and my amazing and loving husband and children. You have all helped me to find and pull out strengths I never knew I had, and I am eternally grateful for every act and word of kindness you have displayed during this time.

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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation attempts to articulate a womanist practical theology of resilience rooted in the lived learned experiences of African American women who lived through the Civil Rights Era as a spiritual resource for people enduring oppression in modern American society. Women are recorded as being the majority during Civil Rights Movements.[1] Yet their participation perspective is missing within most stories that tell the stories of this time. With a generation of Civil Rights participants aging it is vital that their stories are recorded so that the lessons and the legacy can be shared. The wisdom gained from actual participants is priceless. The stories of the Ordinary African American women that came of age during the Civil Rights movement and the practical theological resources of resiliency used during this, oppressive yet triumphant, time in history is vital information to countless disciplines of study. Those resources can be defined as but are certainly not limited to traditions, songs, elders, mottos, ministry participation, scriptures. Prayers, etc. Because of the intersect and overlapping of faith, psychology, sociology, and history this study will be a contribution to multiple disciplines of study and not just one. This study must engage sociology, psychology, theology, & history of racism, classism, sexism, and how these areas meet to create what is the participants lived learned experience. This study differs from other studies on Civil Rights participants by focusing on women participants in non-leadership roles and their relevance and stories aren't juxtaposed to any leader or particular historical event.

In a research study targeting African American women and their experience with God, faith in God was indicated as the primary method of coping with hardships while

[1] Alice Walker, In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, (Orlando: Harvest Book, 1983) xi

finding meaning and understanding in life[2]. Prayer specifically was identified as one of five practices that women participate in and described as contributing to their resilience.[3] In the study conducted by N. Lynne Westfield, studying the spiritual practices of Christian African American women in the face of persistent oppression, the five practices identified as contributing to their resilience were: gathering, pleasuring, playing, praying and learning. From this study which focused on women in poverty I choose to focus on identifying what practical theological spiritual resources were used by ordinary women during the civil rights movement.

This study examines the practical theological resources of African American women that birthed and sustained their resiliency. Identifying these resources and allowing them to the participants to share from their individual perspective allows for history to be told from a minority perspective. This study shines a light on the narratives of a sample of this population. The advantages of a study like this are great however for now I will focus on three advantages:

- Intergenerational dialogue is encouraged.
- Tradition provides identity. The lives and pilgrimage of senior community members contain vital content for the identity, survival, renewal and progress of younger African Americans.[4]
- Elders as "Local experts" can assist to better understand the African American habitus. Habitus is defined as the conscious and unconscious regularity within a

[2] Robert Rubenstein & Helen K. Black, Old Souls: Aged Women, Poverty, and the Experience of God (Aldine Transaction; 1st Edition, 2000); Olivia G. M. Washington, David P. Moxley, Lois Garriott, Jennifer P. Weinberger,
[3]N. Lynn Westfield, Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 38.
[4] Bobby Joe Saucer and Jean Alicia Elster, Our Help in Ages Past: The Black Church's ministry among the Elderly (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005), 2.

community. For this study it is specifically speaking of the historical practices that produce individual and collective norms.[5]

Wisdom is defined as knowledge and principles that develop within a specific group or period of time, sound actions or decision making with regard to the application of experience, knowledge and good judgement.[6] Confucius describes three methods for attaining wisdom: Reflection which is considered noble, Imitation, he labels as easy and experience which he labels as the bitterest. The wisdom gained through the bittersweet experiences of ordinary African American women, particularly during the civil rights era, is not something that should be overlooked. The ordinary women of this study now all elders, over the age of 65, are the storytellers, bible interpreters, and practical wisdom guides of the community. The current culture places technology and skilled knowledge over the wisdom of tradition and history.[7] This study displays the value in knowing and understanding the practical theological resources that were utilized.

African American women understand the profound notion that the empathy and compassion of Jesus exists for them, then and now.[8] Sharing narratives is the opportunity to witness to the presence of God in the mundane tasks of life and provide witness to the notion shared by Womanist theologian Jacquelyn Grant when describing the act of doing womanist theology "We must read and hear the Bible and engage it within the context of our own experience. This is the only way that it can make sense to people who are

[5] Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of Theory of Practice (Cambridge University Press, 1972).
[6] Dictionay.com/wisdom, accessed 5/2/2019
[7] Anne Streaty Wimberly, Honoring African American Elders: A Ministry in the Soul Community, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 172.
[8] N. Lynn Westfield, Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 79.

oppressed."[9] The interviews share narratives of women of faith and how that faith was developed and utilized throughout their lives the wisdom attained through their unique experiences is undeniable.

These ordinary women were not labeled or acknowledged as leaders during the Civil Rights Movement, they supported, marched, sat-in, sacrificed and created the masses that participated in the March to Selma also known as Bloody Sunday,[10] The Montgomery Bus Boycott[11], The March on Washington, The Greensboro Sit-ins,[12] as well as numerous other activities that required unity and the participation of unnamed multitudes for its effectiveness and success. This study will examine the stories of these unnamed and unacknowledged women that survived and thrived through the Civil Rights Movement. Specifically looking at the practical theological resources utilized to sustain a spirit of sacrifice and courage.

The research question for this study is what practical theological resources were used and developed by "ordinary" African American women, coming of age during the Civil Rights movement, that made it possible to deal with the emotional, spiritual, and physical challenges of the time. The history of African Americans will briefly be reviewed along with the Civil Rights Movement within this literature to provide understanding of the events that occurred as well as what lead to the need for such a movement. To understand the journeys of African Americans, particularly African

[9] N. Lynn Westfield, Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 78.
[10] "Students March at Nyack." The New York Times. New York, New York, Mach 11, 1965 p19. Retrieved March 21, 2017.
[11] H. R. Wright, The Birth of the Montgomery Bus Boycott (Charro Book Co., 1991), 123.
[12] http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/the-greensboro-sit-in. Written February 4, 2010, Accessed March 21, 2017.

American women, within the United States is to first start with their history and origin to the country. For many identified today as African American, the journey to the United States of America began by violence. A forced journey to an unknown place is a powerless journey. This study will give its participants the power to share their own narrative in their own words their journey of resilience. The passage of this knowledge is seen as a means and model for individual and communal healing and renewal[13]

Leadership of the Civil Rights Movement

In Dennis C. Dickerson's African American Religious Intellectuals and the Theological Foundations of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as a principal spokesman and symbol of the black freedom struggle.[14] As a young Baptist preacher in his 30's Dr. King took his biblical beliefs and rhetoric along with him and used it to narrate the Civil Rights Movement. Brad Braxton described Dr. Martin Luther Kings as "understanding scripture as a storybook whose value resided not so much in the historical reconstruction or accuracy of the story in the text, but rather in the evocative images, in the persuasive, encouraging anecdotes of the audacious overcoming of opposition and in its principles about the sacredness of the human person."[15] Dr. King marshaled history and his mastery of biblical text and black church rhetoric to justify the movements tactics.[16] By focusing on nonviolent civil disobedience his letter from a Birmingham jail placed Christian discipleship at the heart of the African

[13] N. Lynn Westfield, Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), viii.
[14] Dennis C. Dickerson, "African American Religious Intellectuals and the Theological Foundations of the Civil Rights Movement, 1930-55," *The American Society of Church History* (June 2005), 217.
[15] Brad R. Braxton, "Martin Luther King Jr.: Heir of the African American Interpretative Legacy," A.M.E. Church Review 117, 379-80 (Fall 2000), 60.
[16] Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History 1513-2008 (Alfred Knopf, New York, New York, 2011), 354.

American struggle for equality.[17] He would refer to segregation as immoral as opposed to unjust or a sociological disorder, Dr. King defined segregation as a sin and an evil that was detrimental to God's perfect plan for humankind. [18] Dr. King understood racist systems as systems that needed to be deconstructed and was not the original intentions of God. A God for all people was one of the themes that charged and challenged people to participate in what was considered by the church morally acceptable methods of civil disobedience.

The role of African American churches during the movement was varied. There was never a singular voice that represented the totality of African Americans towards the Civil Rights Movement. Although in many southern communities the church was the central meeting place all African American churches were not equally willing to participate. All African Americans particularly those in the rural south were literacy and access to news from other towns and cities varied drastically, were not always informed of the movement and its many activities. Media coverage was limited and skewed portraying participants as communist. Fear lead some to believe that the "outsiders" who were stirring up trouble in their communities about segregation, were going to get them killed.[19]

Without proper representation of African American women within history, American history becomes a half truth and unjustly labels the few women whose names did make it into print the sole agents of change. Much like the article titled Rosa Louise

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[17] Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History 1513-2008 (Alfred Knopf, New York, New York, 2011), 354.
[18] Dennis C. Dickerson, "African American Religious Intellectuals and the Theological Foundations of the Civil Rights Movement, 1930-55," *The American Society of Church History* (June 2005), 218.
[19] Belinda Robnett, "African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965: Gender, Leadership and Micro mobilization," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 6 (1996), 1663.

McCauley Parks published in the winter season of 1994-1995 by the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education that labeled Parks as "possibly the only living black woman in the United States whose life changed the racial history of our country."[20] This is a gross understatement of the impact women had not only on the Civil Rights Movement but American history. Author Bettye Collier-Thomas said it well when describing the existence of African American women not as an either-or relationship with faith and justice but a complex coexistence of the two.[21] Collier Thomas is quoted as saying "That many black women were deeply imbued with religious convictions and saw their work as a way of implementing their Christian faith"[22] For many their faith was a lived learned practice that they exercised daily through their participation and support in the Civil Rights Movement.

Women in the Church

The African American Church has been undoubtedly the institutional platform by which African Americans have been able to demonstrate their power and authority.[23] Within the church community physical, social and spiritual needs were addressed, making the church the central point of the community. There is no one church type that is being held as a standard African American church experience. There are however characteristics and traits of African American churches that are commonplace. James Cone argues that from the days of enslavement African Americans took certain biblical

[20] "Rosa Louise McCauley Parks" *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 6 (Winter 1994-1995), 18.
[21] Genna Rae McNeil, "African American Church Women, Social Activism, and The Criminal Justice System" *The Journal of African American History*, 96, 3 (Summer 2011) 371.
[22] Genna Rae McNeil, "African American Church Women, Social Activism, and The Criminal Justice System" *The Journal of African American History*, 96, 3 (Summer 2011) 372.
[23] Amy Kate Bailey and Karen Snedker, Practicing What they Preach? Lynching and Religion in the American South, 1890-1929 (2011) https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3856205/

narratives such as the story of Moses and the Israelites and the story of Jesus' crucifixion and from those stories understood God as a "God of the oppressed"[24] from this understanding the early African American churches affirmed Jesus as a liberator. In understanding God as liberator many were able to find freedom. Liberation from a fearful heart was not a way of creating a method for happiness but a beginning for an opportunity for all to find God and their way.[25]

Women's role in the church was usually limited to that of a support adopting a patriarchal hierarchy. Women traditionally provided financial and emotional support and were expected to keep on top of the day to day management of the church according to Dr. Aprele Elliott in the Journal of Black Studies. Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, in her book *If It Wasn't For The Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community* affirms the notion of women as the backbone of the church but continues to say it is this exact description that maintains the invisibility and subordination of women within the church.[26]

For women during this time church was not something simply to do on weekends. The church was the community and represented a lifestyle that was to be carried throughout the week and outside of the church building. Spirituality was best understood as something lived.[27] The mode to which African American women began to define and understand their faith was through lenses that may have experienced oppression, poverty and discrimination well before experiencing God. It goes without saying that these life

[24] James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Orbis Books, 1997)
[25] N. Lynn Westfield, Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 46.
[26] Michallene G. McDaniel, *"Review"* Gender and Society 18, 5 (Oct 2004): 664-665.
[27] Michallene G. McDaniel, *"Review"* Gender and Society 18, 5 (Oct 2004): 664-665.

experiences undoubtedly leave an impression on how one views the world. Looking at faith and life through the lenses of African American women birthed womanist theology.

Women in the Church: Womanist Theology

The reality of the African American woman was a reality that required the negotiation of a world of multiple oppressions experienced. This reality was created by a society that was white majority and often professed Christian beliefs and principles to oppress indigenous people and people of African descent. It was from the same sacred text that African American women found comfort and promise of a better day. With this understanding of Christianity in mind, a tool used for and against African American women, a conversation about the complexities of the faith black women carry can begin. Such passages of scripture were found in Luke 6:31 "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" This text was applied to study participants life in a manner to explain and define their actions of forgiveness towards their oppressors. Luke 4:18 "The spirit of the Lord is upon me… to set the captives free. Civil Rights participants believed that their civil disobedience was in many ways ordained by God and exemplified throughout old and new testament scriptures. Galatians 5:1 "So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law." These scriptures along with the narrative of Jesus interacting and advocating for the oppressed[28] were the make-up of many women, living during the Civil Rights Movement, faith understanding. A faith that believed that God not only sat with the oppressed but walked with the oppressed was adopted and applied. With scriptures in hand, the narrative of Jesus, and

[28] Matthew 25:40, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 9:36, Luke 14:13

the story of the exodus as resources "church women"[29] believed they not only had an obligation to social justice but by doing so were exercising their faith.

The presence of racism along with the struggle of sexism created a unique life experience for African American women and how they saw and related to God. Famed author Alice Walker described this reality by coining the term womanist.

> The term womanist came from the term womanish (Opp. of "girlish," i.e. frivolous, irresponsible, not serious). A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "you acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or non-sexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally a universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black?" Ans. "Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented."

[29] Genna Rae McNeil, "African American Church Women, Social Activism, and The Criminal Justice System" *The Journal of African American History*, 96, 3 (Summer 2011) 373.

> Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time." Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless. Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender[30]

Womanist theology[31] is described as a way of reading, hearing and engaging the bible with the context of one's, African American Women, unique experience. This is the only way that the sacred Christian text can make sense to people who are oppressed. Black women function in this form of theology as a way of understanding and experiencing God. Womanist Theology by definition is for the survival and wholeness of all men women and children, while discerning the voice of God through the unique struggles of women of color, African American Woman in the United States in particular.[32] African American women understand the profound notion that the empathy and compassion of Jesus exists for them, then and now.[33]

Lawrence Mamiya's "African American Christian Social Ethics" in *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* speaks to the reality of African American women by stating that "black women's realities are not only plagued by racist oppression and economic exploitation but by sexist abuse and gender bias as well. Black women's relationship with suffering has been all encompassing."[34] With an understanding of suffering and

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[30] Alice Walker, In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, (Orlando, FL: Harvest Books, 1983) xi-xii.
[31] Alice Walker, In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, (Orlando, FL: Harvest Books, 1983) xi-xii.
[32] Alice Walker, In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, (Orlando: Harvest Book, 1983) xi.
[33] N. Lynne Westfield, *Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2001) 79.
[34] Lawrence Mamiya, *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 141.

oppression womanist theology articulates the view of women that want to see liberation not just for themselves but for all oppressed, suffering people.[35]

Women in the Movement

Research on Civil Rights participation reveals that women were the majority. The sit-ins, marches and protest were largely populated by women, college women and young girls.[36] African American women in the community of all ages and backgrounds worked together and shared resources while supporting one another along the journey to justice and equality. Women participants involved in the movement were quoted as saying that they were motivated from early childhood to fight for (their) rights.[37]

The roles, contributions and voices of women during the Civil Rights Movement have been inconsistent and limited to the few women labeled as leaders. The narratives of these women leaders are often limited in comparison to their male counterparts and included within a larger body of work that is focused solely on one of the male leaders during the movement, usually the "Big Six" and her affiliation with him.[38]

Women were active participants throughout the Civil Rights Movement. African American women in particular assisted in all aspects of the movement both with and without titles. The various definitions used to describe who the leaders of the time were

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[35] Lawrence Mamiya, *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 141 & 252. A term coined by black socialist and used to describe the race-class-gender oppression specifically as they impact women of color in the United States. The theory states that the concurrent, dynamic interaction that occurs between various types of oppression – specifically classism, racism and sexism – creates a profound experience of oppression that makes it difficult for marginalized groups to form solidarity in overcoming the oppression of all.

[36] G. Lerner, Black Women in White America (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1972), 351.

[37] LaVerne Gyant, "Passing the Torch: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement" *Journal of Black Studies*, 26 no.5 (May 1996) 635.

[38] The "Big Six" includes: James Farmer, of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); Martin Luther King, Jr., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); John Lewis, of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); A. Philip Randolph, of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Roy Wilkins, of the National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Whitney Young of the National Urban League.

and what their roles included rarely left room for women. Black liberation Scholar James Cone insists that the most glaring and detrimental failure of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X was the failure to critique sexism within and without the movement.[39] The time of fighting for racial equality was an emotionally charged time that required the community to ban together in unity in a way that has not been recorded before. This coming together however did not come without its own struggles and complications. The fight was for racial equality not gender equality therefore men were the top choice for leadership roles.

It was quite popular to describe movement participation as "Men led, but women organized."[40] Darlene Clark Hines' in *Men Led but Women Organized: Movement Participation of Women in the Mississippi Delta* described women as organizers in Black Women in United States History as organizers in such that they secured meeting places, ensured communication and announcements, provided transportation and meals among other administrative tasks. The definition of what was required of the leader varied from coordinating and organizing to simply showing up the day of a demonstration and speaking publicly while allowing someone else to organized most likely women who were tasked with galvanizing the crowds, creating an order for demonstrations and meetings, and managing resources. The histories of African American women and Civil Rights organizations cannot be researched separately. Anne Standley describes the lack of women within historical texts of the Civil Rights Movement as followed "The omission of women from many of the histories of the movement is also apparent in the

[39] James Cone, Martin and Malcolm in America: A Dream or a Nightmare (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991).
[40] Charles Payne, "Men Led, but Women Organized: Movement Participation of Women in the Mississippi Delta" Pg. 1-13 of Darlene Clark Hines, "Black Women in United States History"

widespread use of the metaphor of reaching manhood to describe the self confidence that blacks gained from the movement... Historians failed to consider the impact the movement had on black women's consciousness."[41]

Women whose belief in the inherent dignity of all human beings fueled participation during the Civil Rights Movement in spite of fear and danger. Cultivating leadership skills and provided necessary community services such as education and trainings that were key for racial progress are only a few tasks that were noted as being lead and organized by women.[42]

Women in Church and the Movement

The role of women in the Civil Rights Movement will also be a major topic in this literature review. The Civil Rights Movement may have been led by men but the majority of the participants were women. In Alabama one of the most segregated states, where the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was outlawed, Ralph Abernathy created the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) women made up majority of the organization's members with 61.7% it was women that also heavily populated the churches that provided the foot soldier's for the movement. [43] Mary Schueneman's *A Leavening Force: African American Women and Christian Mission in the Civil Rights Era* also presents an understanding of black women as activists with their grassroots efforts and leadership skills.

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[41] Anne Standley, "The Role of Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement" In Black Women in United States History: Women in the Civil Rights Movement Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965, Ed. Vicki Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, & Barbara Woods. Brooklyn (NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1993), 183.
[42] Mary K. Schueneman, "A Leavening Force: African American Women and Christian Mission in the Civil Rights Era" *American Society of Church History*, 81:4 (Dec 2012), 875.
[43] Wilson Fallin Jr., "Black Baptist and the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement," 1956-1963, *Baptist History and Heritage* (Summer/Fall 2005), 44.

Numerous edited volumes and monographs uncover the indispensable role of women in grassroots organizing for civil rights, illuminating the ways "men led, but women organized" as noted by Charles Payne.[44]

Jacquelyn Grant discusses feminist and womanist theology and women's process of rearticulating their experience of Jesus and wrestling with Christology in *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response*. This book focuses on the contextualization of women's Christology while acknowledging that the African American woman's experience with God has been ignored and the church many times used as a tool of oppression towards women.

Melva Wilson Costen describes African's in America as experiencing God's divine intervention prior to the experience of a harsh slave system. God had been actively present in the lives of African people long before their forced move. In a variety of ways, primal world views, basic beliefs, and ways of knowing God from affective and cognitive experiences became the foundation for empowerment in worship in assembly and empowerment for survival in life.[45]

The black church has provided the freedom struggle with its major actors as well as tremendous economic and moral support. According to Michael Eric Dyson in *Reflections on Philosophy, Race, Sex, Culture and Religion, "t*he black church,

[44] See eds. Vicki L. Crawford, Jacquelyn Anne Rouse, Betty Woods, Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). The quote from Charles Payne is the title of his essay in this volume. Other examples of this dominant trajectory included: Bettye Collier-Thomas and Vincent P. Franklin, eds., Sisters in the Struggle: Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Lynne Olson, Freedoms Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830-1970 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001).

[45] Melva Wilson Costen, African American Christian Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 105-106.

collectively, was the tangible and vital engine that drove black liberation."[46] The events of the Civil Rights Movement and the black church were many times one and the same. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a vitalizing and energizing force millions of people continue to experience the richness and sublime character of religious commitment through his legacy.[47] The movement both then and now initiated an engagement of various religions, races, genders and social classes created unity and a common goal for equality.[48]

A richness of history and culture coupled with a hermeneutic that placed God with the oppressed is too general of a summary for this untold story. A synopsis of the history and events leading up to the Civil Rights Movement along with key figures needs to be explained.

It is my hope that this dissertation leaves room for new voices to share their perceptions and experiences of a major historical event that was largely influenced by faith.

[46] Michael Eric Dyson, Open Mike: Reflections on Philosophy, Race, Sex, Culture and Religion (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2003), 291.
[47] Michael Eric Dyson, Open Mike: Reflections on Philosophy, Race, Sex, Culture and Religion (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2003), 301.
[48] Debra L. Schultz, Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

CHAPTER TWO. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review attempts to provide a solid foundation to better understand the theological resiliency of African American women who came of age during the Civil Rights Movement as found in their oral histories. In order to provide this foundation, this review will explore Africans Enslaved in America & the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Domestic Slave Trade, Negro Spirituals, Secret Meetings & the Birth of the Black Church, Anti-Slavery Movements: The Journey to Freedom, The Journey to Freedom-Civil War, 13th Amendment-Jan 31, 1865, Jim Crow, Birth of the Klan, The Beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas, Rosa Parks, The Civil Rights Movement, Women Leaders During the Civil Rights Movement, JoAnne Gibson Robinson – Montgomery Bus Boycott, Fannie Lou Hamer, Diane Nash, Ella Baker, Daisy Bates, Non-African American Civil Rights Activists, Resilience, and Theological Resilience. By examining these subjects through professional literature in the fields of Practical Theology, African America history, Intersectional Theology, and Womanist Theology.

This literature review is rooted in the perspective of intersectional theological methodology. Through the rooted awareness of identities, social structures and power intersectional theology seeks truth.[49] Intersectionality is a tool for analysis that takes into account the simultaneously experienced multiple social locations, identities, and institutions that shape individuals collective experience within hierarchically structured systems of power and privilege.[50] Rather than seeing theology as a single pursuit of a

[49] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 107.
[50] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 2.

unified truth intersectional theology will assist this study in embracing the theological multiplicity that arises from diverse identities and social locations.[51] Understanding the duality of the participants assist with acknowledging that no experience is seen through a singular lens is an overlapping of systems and beliefs that the participants have both voluntarily and involuntarily participated in. This study examines the experiences of self-identified African American women, that identify as Christian, that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement, Over the age of 65. These determining factors are all elements that intersect to create what is their unique experience and identity as African American women. Identity and experience are never removed from the theologies we produce, there is always context in which theology is done.[52] It is with respect to identity and experience that this study will examine the practical theological tools that were utilized during this time period.

This study is based on the oral history told by non-dominate voices. Non-dominate voices is defined in this study as women that were not looked to as leaders during or noted personally as contributors to the Civil Rights Movement. The sharing of their personal experiences as African American women that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement. Coming of age is defined as the formidable years of adolescents to young adulthood. The experiences spiritual, physical and mental will be recalled and reflected upon for theological resilience factors and meaning. The population of the participants in the Civil Rights Movement was diverse with a common theme of equality. From the experiences of these ordinary African American women a lot can be learned

[51] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 107.
[52] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 41.

about the presence and movement of God during times of struggle and what resiliency factors can be identified as comforting, soothing, reassuring, and empowering. For the purpose of this study ordinary is being defined as self-identified African American women that were not publicly labeled or referred to as leaders during the Civil Rights Movement.

The Civil Rights Movement will be limited to the years of 1950-1970 for this study. With there being occurrences of civil unrest well before and after this time, I am limiting this study to this twenty-year time period because it includes some of the most prominent Civil Rights demonstrations and victories. Within this time period several major historical events took place making it a key period of history including: Brown vs. Board of Education the dismantling of segregation within schools (1952-1954), the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-1956), the signing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the death of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968. These events along with several others were major historical victories for oppressed African Americans within the United States. Before moving forward the key concepts that contributed to this study will be identified and defined.

Liberation Theology is an understanding of God from the eyes of the oppressed originating by the South American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez.[53] Womanist Theology a term coined by Alice Walker and defined by African American women every day.[54] Womanist theology is the understanding of God through lenses shaped and formed by the unique experience of women of color in America.

[53] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gustavo-Gutierrez accessed 5/2/2019
[54] Alice Walker, In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, (Orlando, FL: Harvest Books, 1983) xi-xii.

This literature review is organized into three main sections: trauma, response, and resiliency. Beginning with a historical overview and highlight the events that lead to the need for the Civil Rights Movement. Understanding the trauma inflicted on early settlers of color, that came both voluntarily and by force, is required in order to have a better understanding of the response to the inflicted trauma and resilience that was cultivated from the trauma. The aim of this study is to allow history to be told through the voices of non-dominate participants because the stories of leaders, the dominate voices, has been shared but rarely from the perspective of the average participant. It is with a lens of intersectionality that a shift will take place to center upon the experiences of the marginalized and hear the voices of those that are usually silenced by social power and hierarchy in an effort to share what is a neglected history.[55]

Africans enslaved in America & The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

For most the African story in what modern day United States is began in 1619 when the first ship docked in Jamestown, Virginia.[56] Some of the first Africans recorded to have reached the shores of the United State of America were indentured servants. Although the process was gradual, Africans in America eventually lost all rights and freedom and became enslaved.[57] According to the Virginia General Assembly Declaration of 1705. It reads "All servants imported and brought into the country . . . who were not Christians in their native Country . . . shall be accounted and be slaves. All Negro, mulatto and Indian slaves within this dominion . . . shall be held to be real estate.

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[55] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 12.
[56] Deirdre Mullane, *Crossing the Danger Water: Three Hundred Years of African American Writing* (New York, NY: Dell Publishing Group, 1993), 1.
[57] Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black: American attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 75.

If any slave resists his master . . . correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction . . . the master shall be free of all punishment . . . as if such accident never happened."[58]

The formation of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade would affect African and American people for countless years to come. From 1710 to 1718 42 percent of all the slaves imported into Virginia were coming directly from Africa and continued to expand.[59] Others were sold to slave traders from existing countries that also had slaves. Virginia maintained the highest population of slaves throughout the history of slavery in America.[60] With a completely free labor force America quickly became an economic powerhouse with enslaved Africans being one of the greatest and most valuable imported commodities.

Domestic Slave Trade

Conversion to Christianity was viewed as the justification for the capturing and enslavement of Africans from the very beginning. It was believed to be a way of saving their souls from their native pagan beliefs and by saving them from eternal damnation Africans were in fact experiencing true freedom.[61] By the dawn of the Civil War the majority of the slaves were American born and Christianity was dominant in the culture. The notion that if slaves were baptized they should, according to the laws of the British

[58] Africans in America: The Terrible Transformation, Part 1: 1450-1750, "Virginia Slave Codes 1705," accessed October 22, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p268.html.
[59] Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 123.
[60] John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1969), 144.
[61] Albert Raboteau, Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 96.

nation, and the canons of the church be freed was legally vague but widely believed.[62] To combat this legal vagueness and keep the upper hand is just two reasons for the inception of slave codes. Slave codes were laws installed in an effort to protect whites from potential loss of property/wealth and to deter uprisings.[63]

Nearly 200 years after that first ship arrived on March 2, 1807, the U.S. Congress passed an act stating "the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States…from any foreign kingdom, place, or country" was prohibited.[64] Although the enslavement of Africans kidnapped and shipped to the United States was outlawed this however did not outlaw the continued enslavement in the United States for those already there. With it now being illegal to import African bodies to America domestic slave trading became even more profitable. Slave traders were forced to transport in secret causing the already dangerous and tumultuous journey to be all the more dangerous. The domestic slave trade was the auctioning, selling or trading of slaves that could take place at general stores, taverns, county fairs and plantations. The fear was that the supply of slaves would become exhausted while the demand was still great. John Hope Franklin describes one of the remedies to this fear of depleting the supply of slaves as "the systematic breeding of slaves, one of the most fantastic manipulations of human development in the history of mankind. Despite the denials and apologies of many of the students of the history of American slavery, there seem to be no doubt those innumerable

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[62] Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 98.
[63] Thompson, Joseph Conan. "Toward a More Humane Oppression: Florida's Slave Codes, 1821-1861." The Florida Historical Quarterly 71, no. 3 (1993): 326.
[64] March 2nd, This Day in History, "1807: Congress Abolished the African Slave Trade" accessed October 22, 2015, http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/congress-abolishes-the-african-slave-trade.

slaveholders deliberately undertook to increase the number of salable slaves by advantageously mating them and by encouraging prolificacy in every possible way."[65]

Negro Spirituals

Communicating in groups of any size was forbidden for enslaved Africans, because of this ban along with the fear of punishment by beating or even death upon hearing of attempts to gather or communicate in mass other modes for relaying a message between slaves and plantations was established. These secret ways of passing along messages were not just to hide from the masters but also other slaves that may have been employed by the master to spy on the slave quarters and gain reward or protection for information given. This need for open communication that was not readily identified by the master or others is one of the reasons Negro spirituals were birthed. The father of African American theology, James Cone, declares that Negro spirituals are not just mere inspirational lyrics to be admired but a serious theology that met a very practical need and should be studied.[66] Albert Raboteau in his book *Slave Religion* describes the worship experience of slaves as such "The religion of the slaves was institutional and non-institutional, visible and invisible, formally organized and spontaneously adapted. Regular Sunday worship in the local church was paralleled by illicit or at least informal, prayer meetings on weeknights in the slave cabins. Texts from the Bible which most slaves could not read, by law, were explicated by verses from the spirituals."[67] Negro Spirituals were an expression of spiritual commitment and a yearning for freedom from

[65] John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 176-177.
[66] James H Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), 19.
[67] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 212.

bondage also a way of releasing emotions and venting sorrow. As described by Deidre Mullane in *Crossing the Danger Waters: Three Hundred Years of African American Writings* in a chapter titled Songs of the Civil Rights Movement "As slaves relied on spirituals for sustenance until the day of freedom came a hundred years before, during the civil rights movement of the 1960's protesters looked to the power of communal song to uphold them during the continued struggle for social progress." In this study songs/hymns/spirituals were listed as a possible source of strength and contributing factor to resiliency based on the role music has played historically in the life of African Americans.

Secret Meetings & The Birth of the Black Church

By the 19th century most slaves believed and or practiced a form of Protestantism that was loosely based on the theological beliefs, understandings and practices of whites in America.[68] Africans did not come without culture or religious beliefs. Public displays of their beliefs, languages or customs came with harsh reprimands in fear of rebellion. While conversion to Christianity was high this did not erase the cultural influence that African people had on their Christian conversion. Despite the fact that some slaves were allowed to attend their masters church and some were required to attend, practically all plantations of any size has their own secret and unmonitored worship gatherings. They were so secretive that they were by invitation only once you were shown to be trust-worthy and often the location was not given until shortly before the meeting was set to occur. Because of the secrecy of the meetings it is often times referred to in writings, like Albert Raboteau's *Slave Religion* and Henry Mitchell's *Black Church Beginnings*, as the

[68] Floyd Thomas, *Black Church Studies an introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 11.

"invisible institution."[69] The invisible institution was the only place enslaved Africans could express their Christian faith, their understanding of God and their desire for freedom. The messages that were directed towards slaves when attending services with their masters were heavy laden with imagery of obedience, hard work and to remain docile.[70] The invisible institution gave space to explore and express a desire for the freedom. These secret meetings were held in seclusion, woods, gullies, ravines, and thickets, in fear of being caught and beaten. Preachers were appointed to lead and teach the group and freedom was often the prayer of the masses.

Drawing from the Bible, Protestant hymns, sermons, and African styles of singing and dancing, the slaves fashioned a religious music which expressed their faith in movement, song dance and storytelling.[71] Unbeknownst to the participants, the invisible church was the black church in infant form and would later birth the seven historically black denominations.[72] The secret meetings in the woods and other hidden places birthed a style of worship still found within many African American churches. This worship style is birthed from the black experience in America and spoke to the unique black experience

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[69] Henry Mitchell, Black Church Beginnings: The long Hidden Realities of the First Years, (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 33.

[70] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 213. The type of sermon to which slaves were constantly subjected to is paraphrased by Frank Roberson: You slaves will go to heaven if you are good, but don't ever think that you will be close to your mistress and master. No! No! There will be a wall between you; but there will be holes in it that will permit you to look out and see your mistress when she passes by. If you want to sit behind this wall, you must do the language of the text "obey your masters." Taken from John B. Cade, "Out of the Mouths of Ex-Slaves," *Journal of Negro History*, 20 (July 1935), 329. Another common notion was that slaves would occupy the "Kitchen" of heaven and would continue there to serve their white masters as on earth.

[71] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 243.

[72] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990). The seven major denominations that comprise historically black churches, exclusively controlled by African Americans are The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME) the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC) the National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC).

including enslavement and oppression over hundreds of years. African Americans gathering for worship service spoke directly to the reality of enslavement, beatings, horrid working conditions, and a desire to be free. The purpose of the worship gatherings was twofold as a place of worship and a place to pursue social justice. The worship gathering allowed enslaved individuals that didn't normally have a voice to speak freely, share in the hardships of life, and explore the Christian faith from their perspective and in some cases strategize against the injustice of white slave masters. Noted theologian Lawrence Mamiya describes the African American church and its function in the United States as "the center of black life, culture, and heritage for much of the history of the African American experience in North America."[73] By the late 1700's African American men were able to be recognized within white churches and even hold titles such as deacon.[74]George Liele the first black preacher, who was also enslaved, founded Silver Bluff Baptist Church (1770) in Silver Bluff, South Carolina. This is credited as the first black Baptist church.[75] From this church other African American ministers were ordained and able to begin ministries that allowed freed and enslaved Africans to worship together.

Many African Americans came to accept Christianity not due to an absence of faith but because of an understanding of the liberating power that was believed to be within the narrative of Jesus. The suffering and ultimate sacrifice, in death, of Jesus was proof that God was a "God of the Oppressed."[76] The oppression, beating and death of Jesus was a common ground for African Americans to understand Jesus from their unique perspective of suffering. Much like the Hebrew people of the Bible enslaved by

[73] Lawrence Mamiya, *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), xxiii.
[74] Lawrence Mamiya, *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 7.
[75] Lawrence Mamiya, *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 7.
[76] James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1975)

pharaoh in Egypt, enslaved Africans believed that God would send a Moses like figure to come and they too would be free. As the reality of the Civil War approached, African American scholar and Civil Rights Activist & Clergyman Fredrick Douglass was quoted in an effort to encourage his fellow blacks as saying "remember that in a contest with oppression the almighty has no attribute which can take sides with oppressors."[77]

Anti-Slavery Movements: The Journey to Freedom

The American Anti-Slavery Society was established in 1833 in Philadelphia founded by William Lloyd Garrison and Arthur Tappan. The objective of the society was stated within the preamble and constitution of the Anti-Slavery Society which states "our object is the immediate emancipation of the whole colored race within the United States: The emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both to an intellectual, moral, and political equality with the whites."[78] By 1840 there were 2,000 societies with the total membership reaching almost 200,000. The American Anti-Slavery Societies sponsored meeting, signed petitions and published articles and other materials in support of their cause and main objective.[79]

The Journey to Freedom - Civil War

The Civil War began due in part to the conflict in the morality of slavery but not the sole reason for the conflict.[80] The Confederate states of America believed slavery was

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[77] William L. Andrews, Ed., *The Oxford Fredrick Douglas Reader* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 225.
[78] Anti-slavery Society of Lane Seminary (Cincinnati, Ohio). Preamble and constitution of the Anti-slavery Society of Lane Seminary. [S.l.], [n.d.]. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. Gale. St Thomas University Library. 10 Nov. 2015
[79]"American Anti-Slavery Society | United States History." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Web. 06 Nov. 2015.
[80] Henry Louis Gates, "Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History 1513-2008" (New York, New York: Alfred Knopf 2011), 122.

something that needed to be preserved. Abraham Lincoln the first Republican president made a declaration against slavery.[81] This declaration caused seven states within southern America to secede and form a new nation known as the confederate States of America. Although this newly formed nation was not widely recognized as such, they maintained their right to govern themselves separate from the northern states and their views on slavery. The Civil War began in 1861[82] with majority of the battle taking place in Virginia and Tennessee, the Confederate States against the Union, in one of the bloodiest wars in American history. In the spring of 1865, the Confederates surrendered to the Union the war was over and enslavement of Africans in America was no more. During this time of war President Lincoln made several attempts to free slaves within confederate states issuing a preliminary emancipation proclamation. A second proclamation was delivered on January 1, 1863[83] declaring all slaves free within the confederate states and exempting the Union states. However, because the confederate considered themselves a nation of its own, and the proclamation was given during the Civil War, leaders and slave owners alike did not feel the need to follow the direct orders of president Abraham Lincoln at that time. The Emancipation Proclamation did not in fact free any of the current 4 million enslaved individuals within the United States.[84]

13th Amendment, Jan 31, 1865

[81] Robert Leckie, The Wars of America (New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 397
[82] Robert Leckie, The Wars of America (New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 397.
[83] Robert Leckie, The Wars of America (New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 449.
[84] "Emancipation Proclamation" The Reader's Companion to American History. Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, Editors. Copyright © 1991 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/emancipation-proclamation.

In 1865 there were approximately 4 million enslaved African Americans.[85] With the passing of the 13th Amendment, the notion that Africans in America were not human beings, but property was outlawed, and enslavement was declared illegal forever more by this constitutional amendment. The 13th Amendment secured freedom, but it did not provide rights, dignity or respect, African Americans were free, yet equality was not a given. Under the leadership of President Andrew Johnson, white southerners reestablished civil authority in the former Confederate states in 1865 and 1866. They enacted a series of restrictive laws known as "black codes," which were designed to restrict freed blacks' activity and ensure their availability as a labor force now that slavery had been abolished. For instance, many states required blacks to sign yearly labor contracts; if they refused, they risked being arrested as vagrants and fined or forced into unpaid labor.[86]

The segregation of African Americans became legal and formal during the progressive era (1890s-1920s).[87] Following the black codes were Jim Crow laws, Jim Crow laws were state enforced laws that maintained segregation with a motto of "Separate but Equal." Jim Crow laws called for the separation of black and white not only in public places such as libraries, schools and restaurants but also when using public facilities such as water fountains and bathrooms and when enlisting in the military. Because of the myth of "Separate but Equal,[88]" the slogan used to validate segregation,

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[85] "Emancipation Proclamation" The Reader's Companion to American History. Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, Editors. Copyright © 1991 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Accessed 11/11/2015 http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/emancipation-proclamation.
[86] "Black Codes" Published 2010 Accessed 11/11/2015 http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-codes.
[87] Woodward, C. Vann, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, NY: Oxford Press, 1974), 7.
[88] In 1896 the Supreme Court ruling in Plessy V. Ferguson upheld the principle of "Separate but Equal" accommodations and education for African Americans and whites. This court ruling maintained a racially segregated society in the south and reinforced racist attitudes decades after slavery had ended, it is from

inhumane treatment of African Americans a need for a Civil Rights Movement began to tug on the hearts and minds of people.

Jim Crow

After the abolishment of slavery in America the creation of Jim Crow laws maintained that while African Americans were free from enslavement, they were not free to come and go as they pleased. Shopping, travel, public facilities, restaurants, schools and the military remained segregated. Jim Crow was in fact a racist character in the 19th century, it is from this fictionalized character that the separate but equal laws gets its name.[89] It is on the merit of court case Plessy vs. Ferguson that racial segregation through Jim Crow laws was upheld for over 50 years.[90]

Birth of the Klan

During the years following the Civil War former slaves were allowed to have all rights that their former slave holders possessed including political power. With the passing of the 14th Amendment in 1868 African Americans were granted citizenship rights and the 15th Amendment in 1870 stated that no one could be denied the right to vote based on race, color or previous condition of servitude. This did not sit well with everyone and in an effort to curb participation and terrorize new black voters the Ku Klux Klan was born.[91] The Klan's tactics were violent in nature out of rebellion of the lost Civil War and to maintain the notion of superiority of whites over blacks. Their tactics

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this court ruling that many southern states began to pass additional Jim Crow laws. These laws helped to socialize people into accepting a world of structural discrimination as normal.

[89] Henry Louis Gates, "Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History 1513-2008" (New York, New York: Alfred Knopf 2011),92.

[90] Henry Louis Gates, "Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History 1513-2008" (New York, New York: Alfred Knopf 2011), 93.

[91] "*A Brief History of the Klu Klux Klan,"* The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, No 14 (Winter 1996-1997) 32.

were hooding their faces to conceal their identities and included murder, hangings, burning crosses, assault, and intimidation.[92]

The response to continued oppression following slavery being declared illegal was the formation of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Beginning of the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement is a time in United States history when people of all races marched, rallied, protest, and sat in all in hopes of equality. Racial equality is something the United States struggled with historically. It can hardly be said that there was a definitive beginning to the Civil Rights Movement. There are however points in history that are remembered as major events that incited the need for change and gave hope that there could be change.

Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas

It wasn't until 58 years after Plessy v. Ferguson[93] ruling that the Supreme Court, in the case of Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka Kansas, ruled racial segregated public schools to be unconstitutional.[94] The Supreme Court is notes

> "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal… Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn.

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[92] Henry Louis Gates, "Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History 1513-2008" (New York, New York: Alfred Knopf 2011), 151.
[93] Henry Steele Commager, Documents of American History Volume II since 1898, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973), 602. Plessy V. Ferguson Court ruling that stated the 14th Amendment did not outlaw segregation as long as equal facilities were provided.
[94] LaVerne Gyant, "Passing The Torch: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement" *Journal of Black Studies*, 26 no.5 (May 1996) 631.

Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to retard the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racially integrated school system."[95] This court ruling was a sign of hope and possibility that things could change. Some mark the 1954 and the Brown v. Board of Education verdict as the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.[96] Others consider December 1, 1955, the day Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger and the subsequent success of the Montgomery bus boycott the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.[97]

Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks has been referred to as the "Mother of the modern-day Civil Rights Movement"[98] her bold display of civil disobedience on the Montgomery, Alabama city bus in 1955 is what some would describe as the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Her refusal and subsequent arrest lead to a boycott of the bus system until they agreed to integrate the city buses. The Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted over a year and almost bankrupted the city of Montgomery bus company. The boycott forced Montgomery to integrate the local bus systems. Her actions and ultimate support of local Civil Rights organizations such as the NAACP propelled her into the spotlight and she quickly

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[95] Henry Steele Commager, Documents of American History Volume II since 1898, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973), 603-604.
[96] Charon Hribar, "Radical Women in the struggle: A review of recent literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movement" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29 no. 2 (1996): 96.
Deborah F. Atwater, "The Voices of African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 5 (1996) 539.
[97] Charon Hribar, "Radical Women in the struggle: A review of recent literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movement" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29 no. 2 (1996): 96. Also noted in LaVerne Gyant, "Passing The Torch: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement" *Journal of Black Studies*, 26 no.5 (May 1996) 631.
[98] Charon Hribar, "Radical Women in the struggle: A review of recent literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movement" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29 no. 2 (1996): 106.

became a symbol of the movement. Even before Mrs. Parks arrest, she showed herself to be a supporter and advocate of the movement remaining active in community groups that worked towards equality. She also worked with the NAACP attending training specifically for Civil Rights workers.[99] In 1999 she was honored by congress as the first lady of civil rights.[100]

The Civil Rights Movement

Andrew Altman in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* explains The Civil Rights Movement as a label used to define a time of civil unrest in the United States of America.[101] Oppressed people within the United States began to conduct public movements to display their displeasure with the current government system that allowed citizens to be classified based on their complexion. The exact time and date of the movements beginning varies. There are instances of organized movement against racism and oppression well before the 1960's however for this study we will focus on the 20 year span of 1950-1970 within that time frame what is most popularly known as the Civil Rights Movement began with the 1954 court case Brown vs Board of Education.[102] This case was one of the first court cases to question the societal norms of separate but equal under the popular Jim Crow system. Jim Crow was the name of the racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively in southern and Border States, between 1877 and the mid-1960s. Jim Crow was more than a series of rigid anti-black laws. It was a way of life. Under Jim Crow, African Americans were relegated to the status of second-

[99] Delphine Letort, *The Rosa Parks Story: The Making of a Civil Rights Icon*, Black Camera 3.2 (2012): 31-50.
[100] Pub.L. 106–26. Retrieved January 8, 2020 (Look Up)
[101] Andrew Altman, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Civil Rights, First published Mon Feb 3, 2003; substantive revision Wed Aug 1, 2012. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civil-rights/.
[102] Charon Hribar, "Radical Women in the struggle: A review of recent literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movement" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29 no. 2 (1996): 96.

class citizens. Jim Crow represented the legitimization of anti-black racism.[103] Within the Jim Crow system schools were segregated based on race, black children and white children could not legal share the same classroom. The Brown family protested this taking the Topeka, Kansas Board of Education to court to explain that the separation was not equal and detrimental to the wellbeing of children. The Brown family won that court case and to this day many consider this the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.

Others would say it was in fact the Montgomery Bus Boycott that began the Civil Rights Movement.[104] The bus boycott took place in 1955 in the state of Alabama. Under Jim Crow laws citizens based on skin color were to be separated. This separation included public transportation. African American passengers were to board the bus in the front only to pay then exit the bus only to enter to be seated in the rear. If seating were limited African Americans would be forced to vacate their seats for non-African American passengers. In the case of the bus boycott it was sparked by that very situation. An African American woman and leader by the name of Mrs. Rosa Parks[105] was seated in what was designated as the colored section when a white gentleman boarded the bus and she was asked to give up her seat. Upon Rosa Parks' refusal to vacate the seat she was subsequently arrested and fined for her civil disobedience. Parks being jailed and fined was not the first time an African American woman had gone through this process for refusing to give up her seat. Just months before Parks' arrest a young minor by the name of Claudette Colvin was arrested for the same thing. It was however Parks arrest that

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[103] Dr. David Pilgrim, *What was Jim Crow?* Ferris State University Sept. 2000, Edited 2012. http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm.

[104] Henry Louis Gates, "Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History 1513-2008" (New York, New York: Alfred Knopf 2011), 328-330.

[105] "Passing the Torch: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement" *Journal of Black Studies*, 26 no.5 (May 1996)
Delphine Letort, *The Rosa Parks Story: The Making of a Civil Rights Icon*, Black Camera 3.2 (2012)

sparked outrage and is said to be the act that sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott. For over 1-year African Americans carpooled and walked all to avoid using the Montgomery county bus system until it agreed that separation was not equal, allowing all paid passengers to sit anywhere on the bus. The bus system held out on the demands and faced bankruptcy before giving in to an integrated bus system.

These acts of Civil disobedience mark the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement with many other acts, demonstrations, sit ins, marches and arrest to follow. This was a significant era in American history because it was the power of people organizing against unjust laws and treatment that changed the society for all. While Jim Crow laws were primarily enforced in the American South[106] the movement of all that participated changed the laws for the country as a whole. Countless authors and historians have penned the works on the Civil Rights Movement.[107]

Charles Marsh in *The Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama* offers a theological analysis of the Civil Rights Movement and new lessons to the church, the community, and the academy.[108] There is no such thing as a Civil Rights Religion however there are particular ways of thinking about God, Jesus Christ and the church that framed the basic purposes and goals of the movement.[109] Organizations that were not

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[106] Andrew Altman, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Civil Rights, First published Mon Feb 3, 2003; substantive revision Wed Aug 1, 2012. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civil-rights/.

[107] Robert Weisbrot, "Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement" (New York, New York: Norton 1990)
Fred Powledge, "Free at last? The Civil Rights Movement and the people who made it" (Boston, Massachusetts: Little Brown, 1991)
Charon Hribar, "Radical Women in the struggle: A review of recent literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movement" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29 no. 2 (1996)

[108] Charles Marsh, The Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama: Interpretation and Application, *Modern Theology* 18, no 2 (April 2002): 231.

[109] Charles Marsh, The Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama: Interpretation and Application, *Modern Theology* 18, no 2 (April 2002): 233.

considered faith based organizations that were active within the movement also held religious convictions such as SNCC.[110]

During the Civil Rights Movement the dual identity of the African American church became even more prevalent.[111] The African American church performed as host for political rallies, meetings and safe havens for all Civil Rights Activists while always maintaining its spiritual origin instilling hope, love and an understanding of God and who God is within the life of the oppressed. The dual, political and spiritual roles, played by the church are something historians and authors alike gave light to in the many writings on the Civil Rights Movement and its participants.[112] Particularly Charles Marsh in *the Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama*, Marsh offers a theological analysis of the Civil Rights Movement. Marsh explains "there is no such thing as a Civil Rights religion however there are particular ways of thinking about God, Jesus Christ and the church that framed the basic purposes and goals of the movement"[113] he goes on to mention other organizations that were not religious in nature but adopted faith based principles during the movement such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).[114]

Liberation Theology gives room to the political expression of theology. It is an understanding of God through the eyes of the oppressed. While liberation theology is credited with having several founders[115] the primary one acknowledged is Peruvian

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[110] Charles Marsh, The Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama: Interpretation and Application, *Modern Theology* 18, no 2 (April 2002): 235.
[111] Leonard Gadzekpo, "The Black Church, The Civil Rights Movement and the Future"
[112] C. Eric Lincoln, Lawrence Mamiya, E. Franklin Frazier
[113] Charles Marsh, The Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama: Interpretation and Application, *Modern Theology* 18, no 2 (April 2002): 231.
[114] Charles Marsh, The Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama: Interpretation and Application, *Modern Theology* 18, no 2 (April 2002): 231.
[115] Michael Novak, "Will it Liberate? Questions About Liberation Theology" (New York, New York: Paulist Press 1986) Credits liberation theology to: Jesuit Father Juan Luis Segundo, Former Brazilian priest Hugo Assman, professor Gustavo Gutierrez, Jose Miranda, and Jesuit Arthur F. McGovern.

professor Gustavo Gutierrez. Gutierrez was a trained doctor turned priest, philosopher and psychologist. The concepts of Liberation Theology grew from the Latin American political and socio-economic struggle. Gutierrez believed that the bible taught socio-political liberation. His view of the bible was that churches has watered down the passages discussing poverty and stripped them of meaning. Gutierrez believed the words of Jesus should be taken literally and action was not only needed but a spiritual requirement.[116]

Similar to the African American church and now the understanding of God there is a duality in understanding and reality. Stephanie Mitchem acknowledges in *Sankofa: Black Theologies* that the challenges faced during this era required an examination and at times reexamination of beliefs that forced a conversation in a way that only liberation theology would allow politics and religion to speak to one another.[117] One of the most memorable displays of duality during the Civil Rights Movement is the Cross. When looking at the history of the cross in the United States and within the African American experience there is a unique parallel. The cross has a dual relationship as a display of oppression and salvation. For African Americans primarily in the south it was used as a symbol of hatred and burned at the homes of blacks that were considered a threat or too outspoken against segregation. That same cross was looked to and portrayed within the African American Christian church as a sign of sacrifice.

This duality of the cross has not been spoken of much the most recent writings are from Dr. James Cone and his book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* in it Cone discusses

[116] Colin Blakely, "Great Christian Thinkers: A Beginners Guide to Over 70 Leading Theologians Through the Ages" (Peabody, Massachusetts 2000) 63.
[117] Stephanie Mitchem, Sankofa: Black Theologies, Cross Currents (Spring/ Summer 2000): 177.

the method used to kill Jesus, by hanging on a cross (tree), as the same method used to kill many African Americans by hanging them on a tree.[118] The contrast of the two natures of the cross stands as the premise for black theology[119] and its need for further study. Black theology embraces the teachings of liberation theology and one of the main objectives of both theologies as stated by Stephanie Mitchem in *Sankofa: Black Theologies* is to understand the "need to divorce the concept of Christian love from any form of submission to oppression."[120] As the theological and political boundaries continued to blur in society new theologies helped to understand the commonalities of oppression, struggle and faith between Jesus and African American people.[121] One of the most relevant theologies to shine light on the importance of understanding the duality of faith and the African American woman's story is womanist theology.

Womanist Theology

Womanist theology is a theology unique to African American women. The term is coined by author Alice Walker and is said to describe a young girl acting Womanish or displaying the characteristics of adult women she has seen.[122]

Womanist theology, theology from the perspective of women of color, was a needed voice for the African American community. African American women were present throughout history but were rarely given the opportunity to share their perspectives and stories. Womanist theology is best understood as a theology that speaks

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[118] James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree (MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011).
[119] An understanding of God from the African American experience
[120] Stephanie Mitchem, Sankofa: Black Theologies, Cross Currents (Spring/ Summer 2000): 179.
[121] Gayraud Wilmore, Black Religion and Black Radicalism, 1973
Albert Cleage, Black Messiah, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1968).
Albert Cleage, Black Christian Nationalism: New Direction for the Black Church (New York: W. Morrow, 1972).
[122] Alice Walker, In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, (Orlando, FL: Harvest Books, 1983) xi-xii.

from the experiences of African American women in the United States. Women navigating racism, sexism, poverty and oppression while holding sacred their belief in divine power are the building blocks of womanist theology. There are numerous women that have contributed to the development of womanist theology including but not limited to: Cheryl Townsend Gilkes *If it wasn't for the Women* a collection of essays that highlight the roles of women in church and society. Delores Williams *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* a discussion on womanist versus feminist views and the parallel of particular female narratives within the bible and African American women's journeys. Katie Cannon *Black Womanist Ethic* looks directly at the moral and ethical character and wisdom of African American women. Alice Walker *In Search of Our Mothers Gardens: Womanist Prose,* Walker speaks directly to the tumultuous times of the Civil Rights Movement and what it means to be a black woman and the many hats they wear. Race, gender and class in regard to womanist theology is introduced by Stephanie Mitchem in *Introducing Womanist Theology.* Jacquelyn Grant *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* discuss the significance of a male God and feminist implications. James Cone also in multiple works was one of the first theologians to say African American women need to be able to speak for themselves and their experiences. Along with countless other womanist scholars that continue to add to the growth and development of the discipline.

Womanist Theology is understood as a woman focused theology that hopes to locate God in the lives of everyday women. One of the most comprehensive definitions

of womanist theology was written by womanist theologian Delores Williams in her book *Sisters in the Wilderness*:

> Womanist theology attempts to help black women see, affirm and have confidence in the importance of their experience and faith for determining the character of the Christian religion in the African American community. Womanist theology challenges all oppressive forces impeding black women's struggle for survival and for the development of a positive, productive quality of life conducive to women's and the family's freedom and well-being. Womanist theology opposes all oppression based on race, sex, class, sexual preference, physical disability and caste… Womanist theology… also branches off into its own direction, introducing new issues and constructing new analytical categories.[123]

Based on this definition and understanding of Womanist Theology it has been chosen as a vital conversation partner within this study. Linda Hollies in *Bodacious Womanist Wisdom* explains that womanist theology is an approach that uplifts a spirit of wisdom gained from the women that came before them.[124]

It is in the spirit of acknowledging the women that may have opened doors that they themselves were not able to walk through that African American elders are examined for their story of trail blazing and life in the midst of some of the most triumphant days in American history.

They were teachers, domestic workers, lawyers and sharecroppers...

They were students, activist, organizers, and political leaders....

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[123] Stephanie Mitchem, Introducing Womanist Theology, Maryknoll, (New York: Orbis Books, 2002) 60.
[124] Linda Hollies, Bodacious Womanist Wisdom (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press 2003) 2.

> They were mothers, daughters, sisters, lovers and friends...
>
> They came from the north, south, west, and east…
>
> They were poor and they had means...
>
> They were blacks, Asians, Latina, white, indigenous, and biracial...
>
> They were Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Agnostic...
>
> They were communists, conservatives, and liberals...
>
> They fought for voting rights, women's rights, economic rights, and above all, for a vision of human rights that would ensure the dignity of every person.[125]

This brief description of who the women of the Civil Rights Movement were, provided by Charon Hribar in her Journal Article *Radical Women in the Struggle: A Review of Recent Literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movement.* These women were not leaders in their communities or the movement and yet they possessed a resilience throughout this time that aided them throughout life.

Lawrence H. Ganong and Marilyn Coleman acknowledge that resilience is not a new research topic. It has been studied for over 20 years but focused primarily on children and families according to their 2002 article *Introduction to the Special Section: Family Resilience in Multiple Contexts.*[126] There are numerous definitions and explanations of resiliency within research. Examples of research studies that examine resilience and its definition are T. D. Cosco defines resilience in *Resilience Measurement in Later Life: A Systematic Review and Psychometric Analysis* as an understanding that

[125] Charon Hribar, "Radical Women in the struggle: A review of recent literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movement" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no. 2 (1996): 96.
[126] Lawrence H. Ganong and Marilyn Coleman, "Introduction to the Special Section: Family Resilience in Multiple Contexts" *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*, 64, No. 2 (May 2002) 346.

involves the ability to respond positively to environmental challenges.[127] In *Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Thriving: What Can Be Learned?* Sean Massey defined resilience as an increase in self-esteem, decreased depression and improvements in ones self-competence, sense of coherence or sense of empowerment.[128] *The Resiliency of Children and Spirituality: A Practical Theological Reflection* by Annemie Dillen described resilience as the motivational force within everyone that drives them to pursue wisdom, self-actualization, and altruism and to be in harmony with a spiritual source of strength.[129] With varying definitions there is a commonality that resilience is birth in some form of hardship and is the persistence of will in spite of that particular hardship.

Women Leaders during the Civil Rights Movement

There were many great leaders during the Civil Rights Movement that stood courageously for the people in hopes for equality. The most noted of leaders were coined the "Big Six".[130] The "Big Six" includes: James Farmer, of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); Martin Luther King, Jr., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); John Lewis, of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); A. Philip Randolph, of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Roy Wilkins,

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[127] T.D. Cosco, Resilience Measurement in Later Life: A Systematic Review and Psychometric Analysis. Health and Quality of Life Outcomes (14, No. 16 2016).

[128] Sean Massey, "Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Thriving: What Can Be Learned?" *Journal of Social Issues, 54, No. 2 (1998): 337-339*

[129] Annemie Dillen, "The Resiliency of Children and Spirituality: A Practical Theological Reflection" *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 17, No. 1 (Feb 2012): 61.

[130] Anne Standley, "The Role of Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement" In Black Women in United States History: Women in the Civil Rights Movement Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965, Ed. Vicki Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, & Barbara Woods. (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), 183. James Farmer, Lay Bare the Heart (Fort Worth: TX, Christian University Press, 1998), 215.
In James Farmer's autobiography, Lay Bare the Heart, he identified the term "Big Six" as originating with the founding of the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership. Farmer did not include A. Philip Randolph, instead listing Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women as the sixth member of the group. Farmer also noted that the press often referred to the group as the "Big Four", excluding Height and John Lewis.

of the National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Whitney Young of the National Urban League.

While these men were very vocal and visible throughout the movement, they were also not alone. The argument that men were the principal leaders of the Civil Rights Movement is not wholly inaccurate. Many of the protest that historians describe as led by men were initiated by women. Women's narratives that were just as influential and active has remained understated, women like Claudette Colvin and Bernice Reagon,[131] a student from Albany State College who was suspended from school for her participation in Civil Rights demonstrations but maintained that she would continue to fight and that her participation in the movement had given her confidence to contest all forms of oppression. The marginalizing and or absence of women within historical studies diminish the richness of the history and the movement.

JoAnne Gibson Robinson – Montgomery Bus Boycott

JoAnne G. Robinson was the leader of the Women's Political Coalition (WPC) and a professor. Her hope was to improve the image of blacks through demonstrating courage, dedication and self-discipline in the fight for their rights.[132] Robinson coordinated the Montgomery bus boycott along with E. D. Nixon. Robinson having her own bad experience with the Montgomery city bus only fueled her energy towards the

[131] Anne Standley, "The Role of Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement" In Black Women in United States History: Women in the Civil Rights Movement Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965, Ed. Vicki Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, & Barbara Woods. (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), 185.
[132] Anne Standley, "The Role of Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement" In Black Women in United States History: Women in the Civil Rights Movement Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965, Ed. Vicki Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, & Barbara Woods. Brooklyn (NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), 187.

need for such a boycott to take place. Named the "Joan of Arc"[133] of the movement Robinson is credited for galvanizing middle class women as the muscle of the movement.

Fannie Lou Hamer- Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

Fannie Lou Hamer was the 20th child of sharecropper and grew up to be a sharecropper herself for most of her life. She was 45 years old when she was approached by Civil Rights activist that were apart of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) encouraging African Americans to become registered voters in the state of Mississippi. With little to no education and a sharecropper dialect Hamer was eager to vote and encourage others to do the same. While she was aware of the dangers that came with African Americans attempting to vote she still made her very first attempt at voting in 1962. For the next 15 years she worked tirelessly to ensure African Americans had the right to vote, she devoted the remainder of her life to the civil rights movement. She died in 1977.[134] Hamer credited her mother as being her motivation and example of courage.[135]

She is most noted for her work helping African Americans in rural Mississippi register to vote and for founding the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964. Fannie Lou Hamer is described by her biographer Kay Mills in the following words:

> "She was not some ethereal being who lived unscathed amid poverty. Her health and formal education were severely stunted by her surroundings; her penetrating analysis of society was at times dismissed by those who picked apart her

[133] Aprele Elliott, "Ella Baker: Free Agent in eth Civil Rights Movement" *Journal of Black Studies*, 26, no. 4 (1996), 596.
[134] Neil R. McMillen, *"Review: This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer"* The Journal of American History 81, 1 (June 1994): 350-351.
[135] Chana Kai Lee *"Review: Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer"* The Journal of American History 80, 3 (Dec 1993) 1196-1197.

unlettered grammar or could hear only her Delta dialect. She was thoroughly human: she snored, she cracked earthly jokes, and she mimicked bigoted people. She often was undiplomatic: she could flay a public official or those less resolute than she on a moment notice. She was not perfect, but she was, to many who worked with her, the most inspirational person they ever knew. They drew from her and Mississippians like her a self confidence that helped them later in facing their own difficulties, achieving their own successes."[136]

Diane Nash

Diane Nash was the primary strategist behind the first successful campaign to desegregate lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee. The firsthand experience of seeing the segregated public facilities and experiencing racism fueled her to halt her studies at Fisk and take on the responsibility of the Civil Rights Movement full time.[137] Students throughout Nashville would endure grueling training to model nonviolent behaviors and how to protect oneself if attacked. Nash was a leader in these secret meetings and trainings that often times had to be masked as something religious meetings. While it was not the first attempt of African American students to sit at segregated lunch counter and asking to be served that was successful the persistence of the protesters did eventually prevail. Local stores and business owners began to integrate their stores this however was met with violence and protest from whites that wished to keep facilities segregated. When the violence against African Americans integrating began to peak Nash along with a group of student activist marched to city hall and it was Nash who confronted the sitting

[136] Janice Hamlet, "Fannie Lou Hamer: The Unquenchable Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement" *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 5 (1996), 560.
[137] Peter Levy, The Civil Rights Movement in America: From Black Nationalism to the Women's Political Council, (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing, 2015)

mayor Ben West and asked "Do you feel it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color? Mayor West replied that he did feel it was wrong. With that omission Nashville became one of the first southern cities to begin to integrate public facilities.[138]

Ella Baker

Ella Bakers time as a civil rights activist spans at least 20 years working diligently in the 1950's and 1960's. As a supporter of group centered leadership, Baker worked with numerous civil rights leaders, including the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Thurgood Marshall and A. Philip Randolph. She assisted in organizing and participating in the National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). Ella Baker was appointed as the national director of the NAACP in 1942. She was also the first full time executive director of the SCLC appointed in 1957. Baker is created with organizing and unifying the sit-ins throughout the south.[139]

Daisy Bates

Daisy Bates was an activist, journalist, author and leader of the NAACP. Bates and her husband founded the Arkansas State Press, a weekly newspaper. The Arkansas State Press would publish the movement and activities of the Civil Rights Movement as well as highlight discriminatory activity taking place throughout the state.[140]

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[138] Peter Levy, The Civil Rights Movement in America: From Black Nationalism to the Women's Political Council, (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing, 2015)
[139] Peter Levy, The Civil Rights Movement in America: From Black Nationalism to the Women's Political Council, (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing, 2015)
[140] Peter Levy, The Civil Rights Movement in America: From Black Nationalism to the Women's Political Council, (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing, 2015)

Bates is best known for her participation in integrating schools. In 1957 Bates guided nine African American students into the all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Those students would be written in history and known as the "Little Rock Nine." She remained an advocate for the students and others attempting to integrate and performed as a liaison between the students, their families and the NAACP.

Non-African American Civil Rights Activists

The 1950's, 60's and 70's were a time of political unrest that resulted in many demonstrations against local government. These demonstrations were undoubtedly fueled by the African American faith community, which does not mean that all African American congregations were aligned with the actions and principles of the Civil Rights movement. There were congregations and pastors that believed involvement with such social disobedience would only lead to more unrest in the community. The fear of death, beatings, loss of employment and other acts against anyone that was thought to be involved in the movement was too much for some and therefore many did not participate in the movement. Fear of death or harm was not the only reason for lack of participation by some African Americans activist Diane Nash described herself as not emotionally attached to the movement until she experienced racism first hand. The experience of all African Americans during this time was not the same which created a myriad of feelings both for and against the movement.

It would be incorrect to say that all the leaders and participants of the Civil Rights Movement were African American. There were others that understood and agreed with the principles of the movement and joined in the fight for equality and the end of segregation. Just like African American participants and leaders, those who chose to

participate and stand up against the racist institution of segregation were met with threats, beatings and other cruel acts. The repercussions of participation were very real but effected participants differently.

Some supported privately assisting their own African American workers, others began groups and communities to assist the movement and some came into the movement and marched alongside those being oppressed. An example of groups that were started in the name of desegregation was the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL). The ASWPL was an interracial group that began protesting against the unfair treatment of African Americans as early as 1930.[141] There were also groups like the Fellowship of the Concerned that believed they were most effective at fighting segregation and inequality by following the social norms of the times and maintaining an all-white membership.[142]

There were also individuals that were not a part of an organization or group that marched, participated in sit-ins, rode on buses to desegregate public transportation and those who died during the fight. One of the non-African American participants, Viola Liuzzo, was a wife and mother of five who left her home in Michigan to participate in the movement. Viola Liuzzo came to the south to assist in marching, transporting and supporting in whatever ways she could. Liuzzo is known as the first white woman murdered for her participation in the Civil Rights Movement.[143] On March 25, 1965 Luizzo was transporting marchers in her car when a member of the KKK shot her while

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[141] Jordynn Jack & Lucy Massagee, "Ladies and Lynching: Southern Women, Civil Rights, and the Rhetoric of Interracial Cooperation" *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (2011), pp 493-510.
[142] Gail Murray, Throwing off the Cloak of Privilege: White Southern Women Activists in the Civil Rights Era, (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2004)
[143] "Viola Liuzzo" Published 2004 Accessed 2/1/2016.
http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/viola_liuzzo.aspx

she was driving and killed her instantly. She was murdered in Alabama working with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference which was led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Both the injustice of the time and the danger of speaking out against the cultural norms were real. The hope of an integrated society that treated each citizen with dignity and respect was the driving force of many demonstrations and marches throughout the Civil Rights Movement. The ability to maintain everyday life responsibilities, participate in the demonstrations of the time with the possibility of retaliation was a contributing factor to the resiliency that was birth from the trauma and response of enslavement.

Resilience

Resilience is defined in many ways and studied across the academy from psychology, sociology to theology. Psychologist from the American Psychological Association define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.[144] Sociologist define (social) resilience as social resilience – the capacity of people and communities to deal with external stresses and shocks – and how it contributes to community preparedness, disaster response, and post-disaster recovery.[145] Because of the diversity in understanding and definitions of resilience an in-depth look is needed. Theological resilience will examine specific God talk. The method used will be interviews in order to examine these narratives the methodology will be oral history so a brief explanation of it and its role in past research studies will be presented.

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[144] https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience Accessed 5/2/2019

[145]International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction Volume 19, October 2016, Pages 197-211 Alan H. Kwok, Emma E.H. Doyle, Julia Becker, David Johnston, Douglas Paton, What is 'social resilience'? Perspectives of disaster researchers, emergency management practitioners, and policymakers in New Zealand

N. Lynne Westfield's book *Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality*. Westfield researched resiliency factors among African American Christian women. From her interviews she identified five common practices that women participate in and described as contributing to their resilience.[146] Because most studies have focused on studying the problem instead of the result resiliency was ignored greatly for some time in research history. Throughout the various definitions of resiliency they unanimously speak to favorable results emerging in spite of difficult situations it is also noted that resiliency is not a destination but a journey that continues to bring out new developments and outcomes in the life of the resilient individual.[147] The use of the word resilience implies a positive outcome or ability to adapt to less than ideal circumstances. Eileen Gifton explains resilience as an innate energy or motivating life force present in everyone to varying degrees.[148]

Finally because the women participating in this study have come of age in the 50's and 60's that will make them all classified as senior citizens in 2015.[149] There is a need to review research that has previously been done with African American seniors. According to Bobby Joe Saucer Elders are the guardians of traditions and storytellers of the community. By exploring the narratives and stories of a specific time we can identify their source of resilience while honoring their unique legacy. The lives and pilgrimage of

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[146]N. Lynn Westfield, *Dear* Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001) 38.
[147] Annemie Dillen, "The Resiliency of Children and Spirituality: A Practical Theological Reflection" *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 17, No. 1 (Feb 2012): 64.
[148] Eileen Grafton, Resilience: The Power Within, Oncology Nursing Forum (37, No. 6 2010) 698.
[149] Senior Citizen accessed March 17, 2015, http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Senior+Citizens.

the senior members of the community contain vital content for the survival, renewal and progress of younger African Americans.[150]

Theological Resilience

The development of resilience could very well be something classified as an act of God. The difficulties that birth resilience can be seen as an act of God to empower people to overcome.[151] For some studies resilience is synonymous with God.[152] However the use of God and resilience interchangeably reduces both concepts however it is impossible to talk about religion without discussing resilience. According to Annemie Dillen in the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* "The expression that God can be seen as a source of resilience refers to God's resurrecting power and to the belief in resurrection."[153]

Cedric Johnson in his book *Race, Religion and Resilience* discusses neoliberalism and its effects on race, religion and resilience. American Neoliberalism according to Johnson is an essential interpretive lens for practitioners of pastoral theology and counseling. Neoliberalism according to Johnson is one of the causes and needs for resilience. He describes Black religion as a religious practice that promotes resilience and resistance for black American particularly Pentecostalism and Rastafarianism. It is from this resilience prophetic soul care is birthed which like black religion promotes resilience and resistance it is also an integrative approach that attends to human persons and

[150] Bobby Joe Saucer and Jean Alicia Elster, Our Help in Ages Past: The Black Church's Ministry among the Elderly (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005, 2.
[151] Jim Dekker, Resilience, Theology and the Edification of Youth: Are we Missing a Perspective? Journal of Youth Ministry (9, No. 2, 2011).
[152] Annemie Dillen, The Resiliency of Children and Spirituality: A Practical Theological Reflection, International Journal of Children's Spirituality (17, No. 1, 2012) 65.
[153] Annemie Dillen, The Resiliency of Children and Spirituality: A Practical Theological Reflection International Journal of Children's Spirituality (17, No. 1 2012) 67.

systems. Johnson goes on to explain that understanding human function is impossible without comprehending the context in which it was formed.

A great deal of resilience research and God focuses on youth, traumatic situations or violence. These studies examine how theological beliefs aid in the comfort, understanding and recovery of such traumatic experiences. In the study "God Images and Resilience: A study of Vietnamese Immigrants" by Thanh Tu Nguyen Vietnamese immigrants from Canada that had faced war which resulted in leaving their country and families behind were examined. The use of God images and God concepts was defined by Nguyen as psychological constructs of how one feels towards God were examined to better understand their role while on a journey towards resilience.[154] From the initial documented trauma of the middle passage and decades of enslavement, to a freedom with the stipulation of segregation ultimately leading to the demonstrations popularly known today as the Civil Rights Movement the stories of African American people is an important historical chapter in the worlds history. It is through the lenses of everyday African American women that this study hopes to delve into the lived learned actions of resiliency that were birthed from living through the time of the Civil Rights Movement.

[154] Thanh Tu Nguyen, God Images and Resilience: A Study of Vietnamese Immigrants, Journal of Psychology and Theology (43, No. 4 2015) 271.

CHAPTER THREE. METHODOLOGY

Practical Theology

As a theologian one studies God and how the belief and understanding of God is practiced in everyday life. As a practical theologian in its truest form there is a call to observe what is going on in a community of faith along with what is believed by a person or a community and how that is displayed in their everyday actions. Practical Theologian Richard Osmer is well known for his book *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. In this work, he creates four basic questions in an effort to better understand how people act out their theological believes in life. The questions Osmer poses are:

1. What is going on? (descriptive-empirical task)
2. Why is this going on? (Interpretative task)
3. What ought to be going on? (Normative task)
4. How might we respond? (Pragmatic task)[155]

Practical Theology is unique because it calls for an interdisciplinary dialogue. There are several areas of study that make up practical theology. The overlap can't always be easily traced or defined when looking at the theological practices of a group. In the best effort to honor these women and their stories Intersectional Theology will be utilized. It is through the lens of Intersectional theology that this study will be examined and results dissected.

[155] Osmer, Richard Robert (2008). Practical Theology: An Introduction. William B Eerdmans. p. 4. The Core Tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation

Intersectionality was coined in 1989 by law professor Kimberle Crenshaw.[156] It was Crenshaw's argument based on the court case DeGraffenreid v. General Motors that black women often had to choose to partner with black men based on race or white women based on gender but the unique experience and discrimination that comes from being a black woman was not acknowledged or protected.[157] From this perspective Intersectionality was birthed. The multilayered approach of oppression that can intersects racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc and the roles that they play within everyday life. While the Civil Rights Movement was in fact a fight for equal civil rights for all there were other battles simultaneously being fought for the participants of this study that include but are not limited to racism, classism, and sexism.

Intersectionality is a tool of analysis that considers the concurrent multiple experiences of social locations, identity, and institutions that shapes one experience with hierarchically structured systems of power and privilege.[158] This is also described as a lens for understanding how gender, race, social class, sexuality, and other forms of difference work simultaneously to shape people and social institutions within multiple relationships of power.[159]

For most of Christian history straight white male theologians have spoken for everyone, as if their theologies are a reflection of everyone's and not a product of their

[156] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" (University of Chicago Legal Forum 1, 1989), 139-167.
[157]Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 1-2.
[158] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 2.
[159] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 2.

own position and power.[160] For this study the subject focused on is the African American woman and her narrative as a participant in the Civil Rights Movement, her unique voice and perspective is the story often left out.

The potential benefits of women's narratives being left out of history is supporting and sustaining the patriarchal norms that are promoted within western culture. A narrative told as men led and supported leaves readers to believe women behaved in a docile, submissive manner that could be classified as support but not leadership, work or participation.

The truth for African American women is not the same. One voice cannot hold the responsibility of telling the story for all. It is for the reason of truth being relative not universal that there will be a sample group of women that will be selected to participate in the interviews. By interviewing African American women that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement readers are able to get a perspective on a time that is not commonly told. Some women lived in isolation not wanting to endanger their families or themselves therefore choosing not to participate in the Civil Rights Movement and its protests. Some women due to social economic status and location were not directly affected and therefore felt no obligation or connection to the movement. There are also women that felt they had a moral, spiritual and social obligation to themselves and others to participate and support the movement in whatever way possible to ensure segregation ended. The truths of those everyday women that had to learn to navigate life in a time of social unrest without the privilege and or burden of a title is the truth I will reveal in this study.

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[160] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 3.

An intersectional approach is the best approach to enhance the voices of the women that came of age during the civil rights movement to assist in understanding what impacts it may or may not have had on identity formation. Intersectional thinking is taking into account the complexities that come with forming identity.[161] By utilizing an approach that speaks to a multifaceted woman it allows researchers and theologians alike to question the historical accounts that have been given and explore the silenced ones in an effort to unearth the stories of those marginalized within dominant power structures.[162]

The core concepts of Intersectionality[163] are as followed: Social inequality, recognizing the multiple facets that contribute to social inequality. Power, the intersections of power and its construction, maintenance, and distribution. Relationality, examines the interplay of a layered identity without viewing one trait in isolation. Social Context, historical, social, intellectual, political, & religious contexts. Complexity, the acknowledgement of complexity, fluidity, & contradiction within ones understanding. Social justice, a bias towards social justice that dismantles oppression.

Study Process

The steps taken to allow these stories to be told are as followed:

1. Soliciting participants
2. 1st meeting with participants
3. Transcribe interviews
4. Analyze interviews

[161] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 5.
[162] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 12.
[163] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 9-10.

5. Extract and categorize themes

Participants in this study were self-identified African American women ages 65-85 that identify as Christian and were raised in the southern region of the United States.[164] The participants were solicited in stages. The first stage of participants were by a social media post on Facebook asking for participants that meet the research requirements. Once individuals volunteered or were identified a follow up email was sent confirming their voluntary participation along with a copy of the research questions and letter. Those initial volunteers then recommended friends and family that also met research criteria. The snowballing method will be utilized by allowing the recommendations from current participants of others that may be interested in participating.[165]

The first meeting with participants, was done via email, consists of an introduction of the researcher, overview of research idea, addressing any questions or concerns the participant may have, and an interview. The interview will be semi-structured with questions used mainly to guide and focus the conversation when stalled or off topic. Participants will be asked to share their experiences of life during the Civil Rights Movement by reflecting on the time and their understanding of God's presence in their lives both then and now and how those theological encounters assisted in survival during the tumultuous times. Minimal instructions, direction or guidance will be given in an effort to not allow the researchers bias to influence the narrative. The initial session should last 60 to 90 minutes in total. A second meeting time will be scheduled at the end

[164] The Southern region of the United States for this study is defined as: Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana.
[165] Donna Mertens, Research and Evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 2005. 319-320

of the first meeting. All interviews were transcribed using the transcription software Temi.com.

The transcripts will be analyzed for key theological terms and ideas. These theological terms and ideas are defined as acts of faith, reflection and recollection of theological intervention or prevention also specific theological terms. This information will be extracted by looking for specific terms and ideas such as songs, scriptures, membership/ participation in communities or groups, key figures (mentors, pastors, parents, and community leaders), sayings, rituals, worship, traditions, stories, praise, faith, religious practices, roles and responsibilities, music, dance, prayer, food, and family. Mentions of these factors or terms will be examined and categorized later.

The final step will be evaluating the theological terms and ideas for themes. By evaluating themes and not just extracting terms and concepts the scriptures, sayings, rituals, and other theological terms and ideas shared can be placed in context of use i.e. protection, guidance, love, support, victory, etc. It is from the actions and context that the themes of resiliency can be understood and shared.

Oral History

Paul Thompson in *Voice of the Past: Oral History* speaks on memory and the self as a "beguiling call of psychoanalysis"[166] by giving people an opportunity to share memories, that may have been hidden, forgotten or suppressed, we are creating space for healing and celebration.

[166] Paul Thompson, Voice of the Past: Oral History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 173. Psychoanalysis is to hear and heal, to release trapped anger and shame from pasts we had forgotten and through expression, to put it to rest: to win our love through listening to us and then to give it back to us as a new strength in our own self confidence.

This research study entails semi structured interviews with African American women that came of age during the civil rights movement. The interviews last 45 to 60 minutes. Questions asked were focused on the period between 1950-1970. This twenty-year period has been most popularly known as the Civil Rights Movement in American history. The questions are to pull out specific details of the time when the now elder participant was a preteens and teenager. Recruitment was done initially through social media and oral requests soliciting women that meet the specified requirements to volunteer to sit for an interview. The reason for the interview will be described as a study to understand and gather an understanding of resources used and developed by "ordinary" African American women, coming of age during the Civil Rights movement that made it possible to deal with the emotional, spiritual, and physical challenges of the time.

There is no better way to allow these stories to be revealed then to have women share their understanding and experience directly during the time of the Civil Rights Movement. Oral history[167] is a unique method that relies on the recollection or experience of participants as opposed to printed materials. Per author Ivan Jaksic historians have in recent years developed a new appreciation for oral history as a method that illustrates and enriches the historical field, particularly by revealing the views and actions of social sectors traditionally shut out of the historical record.[168]

Oral history is the study of the past or the narrative study of lives and not an uncommon vehicle for the delivery of theological messages and meanings. There are numerous accounts in history throughout the world where cultures sole source of information was through oral transfer. The verbal testimonies of survivors have allowed

[167] "Oral history," accessed Jan 6 2016 http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/oral%20history
[168] Ivan Jaksic, "Oral History in the Americas," The Journal of American History 79, 2 (Sep 1992) 591.

researchers to gain knowledge about social, economic, and religious traditions while also building national identity and history. [169]

Oral history and storytelling are integral to how humanity has marked its historical turning points. Before one word of the Bible was written down, the narratives now read were passed from generation to generation by the carriers of a sacred oral tradition. In essence the invitation to share one's sojourn through the Civil Rights movement is holding true to the honored practice of oral tradition. The form in which the narratives will be shared is through Auto-ethnography which is a form of self-reflection and writing that explores personal experiences and connects this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings. Stories and storytelling are a valuable expression of self, context and communal concepts.[170]

By nature of the interviews covering past experiences will be primarily epiphanies and revelations that occurred after the designated time span. Like the Biographical Interpretative Method faded out memories and delayed recollections will be sought for both theological and non-theological meaning.[171]Research shows that old age comes with an enhanced religious sense; this can be attributed to the diverse life experiences and socioeconomic crises that can accompany aging.[172]

Autobiographers write about "epiphanies"—remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person's life, times of crises that forced a

[169] Ivan Jaksic, "Oral History in the Americas," The Journal of American History 79, 2 (Sep 1992) 590.
[170] Sean Massey, "Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Thriving: What Can Be Learned?" *Journal of Social Issues, 54, No. 2 (1998): 342.*
[171] Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson, "Eliciting Narrative Through the in-depth Interview," *Qualitative Inquiry* 3, no. 1 (March 1997): 5.
[172] Bobby Joe Saucer and Jean Alicia Elster, Our Help in Ages Past: The Black Church's Ministry among the Elderly (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005) 2.

person to attend to and analyze their lived experience.[173] Ethnography is the study of a culture relational practice. Common values and beliefs and shared experiences for the purpose of helping insiders and outsiders better understand the culture. This understanding can also create a new understanding of one's self and life's journey. Posing such research, examining the resiliency of "ordinary" women using auto ethnography can give new explanation and understanding to the African American habitus and identity and faith formation.

While epiphanies are self-claimed phenomena in which one person may consider an experience transformative these epiphanies reveal ways a person could negotiate "intense situations" and "effects that linger—recollections, memories, images, feelings—long after a crucial incident is supposedly finished."[174]Epiphanies within oral history are important. They allow a new revelation and perspective to be presented within already established narratives.

African American women were much of participants during rally's, marches, sit-ins and other demonstrations.[175]Although women were ever present their stories are rarely told. Most narratives placed emphasis on leadership within the movement. The stories of these women are new revelations on an established narrative. Women growing up in the south that were affected directly and indirectly by the Civil Rights Movement have never been the subject of major study. Their resilience and practical theology has all but been ignored. The women focused on in this study are self-identified African

[173] Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur Bochner "Autoethnography: An Overview," *Forum Qualitative Social Research* 12 (January 2011): 1.
[174] Bochner, Arthur P. (1984). The functions of human communication in interpersonal bonding. In Carroll C. Arnold & John W. Bowers (Eds.), Handbook of rhetorical and communication theory (pp.544-621). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
[175] G. Lerner, Black Women in White America (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1972) 351.

American women ages 65-85 years. These African American women were preteens, teens or young adults during the Civil Rights movement and not labeled or acknowledged as leaders during that time. The sample size will be up to 10 women.

By utilizing the oral history methodology, I will be able to record firsthand accounts of a time and place that has since past. By giving a platform for the stories, of these women to be vocalized, information on not only the historic events that took place but also the attitudes and feelings of the participants can be assessed. Every African American was not on one accord with the Civil Rights Movement. There were other movements during this time, some to maintain the integrity of segregation some to dismantle it both violently and non-violently. There is danger in believing and understanding African American women within this time in history as silent bystanders or worse as absent all together. Oral history gives voice to the countless women participants that were not labeled or recognized as leaders yet still were affected deeply by the times.

Two theological studies that have helped develop this methodology are by Christian Landman and Andrew Thomas. Landman's study includes oral histories that examine the construction and deconstruction of religious identity. By conducting interviews Landman could understand the positive and negative factors that the community embraced to define themselves and assist with the deconstruction of the negative understandings the interviewees held of themselves. Theologian Andrew Thomas conducted interviews to uncover the oral history of Pentecostal congregations. The information gained was used to add to the recorded history to ensure accuracy and provide a more detailed understanding of the church lineage. These studies are examples

of the multi layered revelations that can come from historic events and its participants when utilizing oral history.

Method & Methodology

A successful oral history is described as an approach that considers the cultural and historical differences of the regions in which it is applied, and a good oral historian seeks to work with the interviewee in developing and contextualizing testimony Ivan Jaksic explains in his article *Oral History in the Americas*. Social, cultural, and political contexts must be considered when investigating the effects of and resistance of adversity that can lead to resilience.

This research study is a qualitative study[176]. The methodology for this study is Oral History the method will be interviews. Qualitative investigation was chosen because it is believed to be the best avenue to reveal and understand new aspects of resilience and thriving. To have a successful approach to oral history as previously described specific perimeters will be set for interviewees.

To maintain integrity of the participants and contextually of the subject matter all interviewees will be required to meet certain guidelines before their participation is accepted. The study population will be self-identified African American women ages 65-85, born roughly between 1930 and 1950, that experienced life during the Civil Rights Movement in the southern region of the United States and who are currently affiliated[177] with a Christian church.

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[176] Sean Massey, Qualitative Approached to the Study of Thriving: What Can Be Learned? Journal of Social Issues, (54, No. 2, 1998) 341.
Qualitative research is defined as utilizing various methods while studying subjects in their natural settings in an effort to make sense, or interpret what is being observed. Qualitative research addresses routines and problems in an effort to extract meaning.

[177] Affiliation can be membership, active participation, or sick and shut in member which is typically defined as a member that is no longer able to physically attend services.

Participants will be solicited from social media, churches, nursing homes and assisted living facilities as well as referrals from participants. Ten to twenty African American women will be asked to participate in an interview that will last between 60-90 minutes.

The sampling method will be a snowballing method.[178] Snowball sampling has also been referred to as referral sampling, chain-referral sampling and chain sampling. This method utilizes the participant as a primary resource to connect with others with similar experiences. Participants can give recommendations on how to recruit other participants through their associations, family members or friends. Snowballing method is best utilized in a study like this where participants are aging and therefore harder to find due to death and because of the personal nature of sharing one's story and struggle participants are more likely to respond to someone they have a relationship with that referred them rather than a stranger.[179]

Other research studies have cited the snowballing method and interviews as a way of enhancing historical documents and maintaining integrity of lives lost during the time documented. The snowballing method being used to collect interviews of women that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement is most effective in this study because it portrays a different view of American history from the participants. When speaking of the march in Selma there were hundreds of men, women and children that marched that day in Alabama and thousands that marched throughout the south in the 1960's, the question

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[178] Donna Mertens, Research and Evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 2005. 319-320

[179] Hong-zen Wang, "China's Skilled Labor on the Move: How Taiwan Businesses Mobilize Ethnic Resources in Asia" *Asian Survey* 48, 2 (Mar/Apr 2008) 266.
Janine A. Clark, "Field Research Methods in the Middle East" *PS: Political Science and Politics 39, 3 (Jul 2006) 419.*

this study will address is what were their names? Who were those nameless faces that were attacked by dogs, sprayed with high power water hoses, beaten and degraded? Interviews allow the words, perceptions and emotions of the everyday participant to be exposed. Also, in utilizing the snowball method participants can identify who they marched with, cried with, and supported during that time to hear their perspectives as well. It would be not only a disservice to history, if these stories aren't told, it would be a disservice to the ongoing struggle for equality to not examine the resiliency of the women that made up most one of the greatest American movements in history.

Resilience in Research

Other studies measuring the growth and development of individuals throughout good times and bad have commonly used the word resilience or thriving to describe this process. Thriving is a process by which one navigates the ups and downs of life in a way that sustains positive growth and development emotionally, physically and spiritually.[180] Researchers has identified various manifestations of thriving and resilience and noted the manifestation of such as personal growth, increased physical or mental health, new meaning new strength or courage, increased self-esteem, decreased depression, and improvements in one's social competence, sense of coherence or sense of empowerment.[181]

[180] Sean Massey, " Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Thriving: What Can Be Learned? Journal of Social Issues (54, No. 2, 1998) 337-355.
[181] Sean Massey, "Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Thriving: What Can Be Learned? Journal of Social Issues (54, No. 2, 1998) 337-355.

Similar studies have sought to understand and document the variety of expressions of resilience in which persons seek to makes sense of and respond to adverse life situations.[182]

Practical Theology

This study is a study unique to Practical Theology because it allows the participants to speak to the ways in which a reality of oppression impacts one's faith. Faith is a very fluid understanding of God and what God can do. In a time when people are being oppressed by a group that represents itself with burning crosses as an intimidation tactic to preserve your oppression, how does one look to the same cross for guidance, strength and protection? Do the dual roles of the cross during the Civil Rights Movement change your understanding of Jesus and the sacrifice made on the cross? These are questions that can only be answered when looking through multilayered lenses that allow Maslow's hierarchy of needs to speak to Fowler's stages of faith. The unique conversation and answers that come from such a marriage of subjects is a concept of theological resiliency that has yet to be written about.

In psychology Abraham Maslow, an American Psychologist is well known for his research on the basics of human development and needs. Maslow was a psychologist that wanted a better understanding of the motivations and drive of people. His research is centered around the physical and psychological needs of all human beings. From this research, Maslow created a hierarchy of needs[183] with five stages he believed all human beings had the potential to experience. The stages began with Physiological, this being

[182] Sean Massey, "Qualitative Approaches to the Study of Thriving: What Can Be Learned?" Journal of Social Issues, (54, No, 2 1998) 337-355.
[183] Abraham H. Maslow, A Theory of Human Motivation, Psychological Review (50, 1943) 370-396.

the basic and first step of the five needs, Maslow states the human beings need food, air, drink, shelter, and sleep. The second stage is Safety which includes protection, stability, and freedom of fear. The third step is social including relationship building with family and friends, intimacy, love and affection. The Esteem is the fourth step described as achievement, independence, self- respect and respect for others. The fifth and final step at located at the peak of the hierarchy is self-actualization which is the realization of self and personal fulfillment and growth.

This hierarchy however does not take into consideration the plight of those oppressed. When living in a state of oppression the desire for safety and one's everyday needs never quit retires. The need for comfort and provision is left with an oppressed person every day. The classification of Maslow's hierarchy is a graduating of each stage before going to the next, however what does one do when they never graduate from the need and desire for safety, protect and the basic needs of food water and shelter. There is a similar hierarchy that was created to explain faith development. American theologian James Fowler penned *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* in 1981. Fowler describes faith growth and development in six stages. Stage one is the Intuitive-Projective stage which is believed to occur as a young child. In the first stage ones, basic understanding of God is adopted from family or society. Stage two is Mythic-Literal which occurs during school age and is an understanding of God that is literal. Synthetic-Conventional is the third stage that fowler notes most people move on to during their teen years while noting that some people remain in stage two throughout adulthood. Stage three is an understanding of one's religious social circle and the adopting of a community of beliefs. Individuative-Reflective is the fourth stage that

begins in young adulthood when one begins to critically examine their beliefs. The Fifth stage is Conjunctive faith which is the comprehension of life as a mystery and occurs mid-life. The final stage is the Universalizing Faith, Fowler notes few people make it to this stage. The final stage is life lived in service to others without doubt or worries.[184] This measure again like Maslow does not take into consideration the unique needs of the poor or those that are oppressed. Taking these two measures one spiritual and one psychological how do we measure the progress, resiliency and faith of African American women that were raised in a time and place where their oppression was not only expected it was legal. The theological resiliency factors that were birthed from this time would be unique and worthy of research.

Population & Why

The participants of this study are classified by American society as senior citizens. Senior Citizens are members of the community that are 65 years of age and older. These senior citizens can also be referred to as elders. Elder is a term more common in Christian communities simply meaning one of advanced age. For this study, we will simply refer to them as elders a term of endearment and acknowledgement of their age that denotes respect. Allowing the elders of the African American community to share their stories, experiences and truth's in many ways is showing respect to them and honoring them for their contributions to the African American community and the larger society. By honoring elders as repositories of wisdom, we regard what elders know by their years of living. This study accepts that what they know about African American history and culture can provide an awareness and even rootedness not otherwise possible.

[184] James Fowler, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (HaperOne, Revised edition, 1995).

Michel De Certeau a scholar in history, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and social sciences is quoted as saying "The stories of life are never written on a black page but written on pages that already contain writing." In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*.[185] This study considers that there is something about elder's lives from which the younger generations can learn and use to guide their future sojourns.[186] It is the job of the practical theologian to do the work of uncovering and at times interpreting the writings that may otherwise be lost or ignored.

If Christians truly adhere to the sacred scriptures that encourage its followers to "Get Wisdom"[187] numerous times, then we must honor wisdom of those who have attained wisdom in the bitterest of methods.[188] With a generation of Civil Rights participant's aging it is vital that we record the stories, lessons and legacies of a time when women were arguably in one of their most oppressed states. The uniqueness of interviewing this population is that they will have experienced life from Jim Crow laws that held a "Separate but equal" motto to the election of the first African American president. These life experiences are something only the elders of the community hold and individuals with the vantage point of both a lived experience of Jim Crow and the election of President Barack Obama will soon be a memory with no living survivors to share first-hand knowledge.

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[185] Michel De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life (New York: University of California Press, 1988), 43.
[186] Anne Streaty Wimberly, Honoring African American Elders: A Ministry in the Soul Community, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 8.
[187] New Revised Standard Version: The Holy Bible, Proverbs 4:5, Get wisdom; get insight: do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Job 12:12, Is wisdom with the aged, and understanding in length of days?
[188] Confucius, by three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/confucius131984.html#uXCgWo3IDjs5pVyS.99

Jesus as Storyteller

Storytelling is not unique to any culture or group. Oral Tradition is integral to how humanity marks its historical turning points. Before the Christian Holy Bible was written down, the stories, parables, lessons and laws were passed from generation to generation by the carriers of the sacred oral tradition.

When elders are given the chance to share their journey, the resiliency factor of these occurrences can be one of the strongest evangelism tools the church could possess. It was a consistent practice of Jesus to teach with the assistance of parables.[189] These short stories had great meanings hidden within everyday references of life and compelled people to not only think differently but these stories were also used as a call to action. The power and impact that comes with the possibility of engaging elders as parables with lessons to share and a baton of action to pass along is immeasurable. From this perspective, God is a companion in everyday life and not just on Sunday mornings at the local church.

Process

Interviews were conducted via conference call app. The interviewees were given two hours' time slots to choose from along with a copy of the consent form and the questions that would be asked. At the designated time the interviewer and interviewee would call in and conduct the interviews.

[189] "Parable," Accessed 2/2/2016. A parable is a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson.

CHAPTER FOUR. RESULTS

This study was IRB approved at St Thomas University in Miami Gardens, Florida. This study was conducted to understand the practical theological tools used by average African American women that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement. The interviews were conducted via conference call and recorded with the participants knowledge and permission. Each interview began with basic information gathering questions concerning age and community and upbringing. Upon gaining demographic information the questions became more specific to their unique individual experience and their understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. Each participant upon agreement to be a participant in the study received a consent letter along with a copy of the interview questions (see Appendix A & B). Upon completion of the interviews they were all transcribed by Temi.com before being analyzed for key terms and familiar themes.

The complete interviews were engaging and enlightening. Some of the ladies were extremely open and detailed while some had trouble recalling details. The completed transcribed interviews are as followed:

Interview 1

Interviewer:	Okay. Um, okay, I'll start with my first question is, can you tell me your birthday?
Speaker 1	November third, 1952.
Interviewer:	Okay. Um, and how old are you as of today?
Speaker 1:	Sixty five.
Interviewer:	Okay. Were you raised in Toledo as well?
Speaker 1:	Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. So this study is actually looking at theological resiliency throughout the civil rights movement. So the questions I'm going to ask you are about that time and growing up and your impressions of that time, there is no right or wrong answer. Feel free at anytime to say you want to pass or you don't feel comfortable answering a question and we will move on without any problem at all. Okay?

Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewer: So my first question is, can you describe to me your childhood?

Speaker 1: My mother and father were in the home. Uh, my mother's family had moved to Toledo from Mississippi because of the racial strives with my grandfather in stuff and so the whole family came up a lot of the sisters and brothers. My mother was one of 10. Um, my father was from Virginia. He was on his way up to me or, and kind of knew some people in Toledo and kind of stayed there. I'm basically an extended family. Lots of cousins. Um, grandfather died at a very young age. I mean, when my grandfather died when I was young, never knew my maternal grandmother, never knew anybody in my father's family. Um, because he was from Virginia. Matter of fact, I'm trying to research that now and that's a big ball of craziness. Um, you know, we'll live with my grandfather when I was small. Then they moved, then we bought a house where I lived the rest of my life until my parents died.

Speaker 1: I'm going back and forth to school and stuff like that. It was an integrated neighborhood. We were the first black, um, they burned us in an effigy. My aunt was the first black queen. My mother's youngest sister was the first black queen at our school. It was integrated at that point, but not many African American. So even though I grew up in the north, um, we still know what was going on. Like I said, they were from Virginia. They were from Mississippi, my father was from Virginia, so I have the southern tie. So we knew there was a struggle, you know, not that it affected us. Like I said, I pretty much went to predominantly integrated schools all my life until I went to college and I wanted the black experience. That's why I chose Fisk. I could have gone to schools. I mean during that time,

Speaker 1: it was kind of the beginning of getting African Americans and in white colleges. Um, so I had gone to an all girl Catholic high school. There was only five African Americans in my graduating class. So, you know, I did pretty well. So I had offers to go to a lot of schools, predominantly white schools. But I, for some reason I can't tell you why my aunt had gone my end by marriage. I'd got into Fisk for a couple semesters and a couple of people that were friends of my mother, their kids that got into Fisk, even though I didn't know them that well, it was still, it was between Howard and I did apply at Ohio state and schools like that. But I kind of wanted something different and I wanted to get out of, of, of, of Toledo. I really didn't know much about the south when I went to Nashville. Um, but, but, but kind of went there, but my childhood, like I said, we had birthday parties. It was kind of extended family. I had 20 some cousins, you know, so, you know, it was kind of

Interviewer: that community with you growing up, you know, that there were racial, racial tension, but it sounds like it didn't necessarily affect you daily, but you knew it was there. How was that community growing up with your extended family?

Speaker 1: how can I put it? We knew it was there. Um, my mother actually cleaned houses kinda off and on. Once we got older, she was pretty much stay at home. My Dad worked with, uh, um, um, it was a division of national lift that made parts for cars. It was called Dolor Jarvis. And he had started on and he was a lift driver and stuff. So, I mean, it wasn't like we were, we weren't rich, but we weren't destitute. Okay. I mean, he had a decent job for somebody during that time. Um, they bought a house, it was a big older house and stuff. It was kinda messed up and stuff. But my dad has some skills and my uncle by marriage, my aunt's husband had skills and so they really kind of changed the house. Um, we knew it was there. Maybe it was because I was younger.

Speaker 1: We knew it was there because I could, you know, we, we were kind of a curious kids and, and I was probably a little bit more mature, you know, we would over hear, my mother and them talking about stuff and things like that and stuff. But we knew it wasn't until I got a little bit older that I found out that my grandfather might have killed somebody in Mississippi because my grandfather was a sharecropper and they were doing

some stuff and they actually sent him to Oklahoma. So my grandfather, from what I can remember, because he died when I was like eight it was just kind of an unsaid, you knew it was there. Now the other thing is I'm light, my mom was light, my dad was light, so we might not, I mean, I'll be honest, we might not get as much prejudice because we were a little bit lighter and stuff, you know, I don't know.

Speaker 1: I can't say that for sure. It wasn't that we were passing or anything, you know, because like I said, I just did my dna test and, and, and, and talk about a shock when you really find out what you are. I mean I had always heard the stories that my great grandmother was half white and my great grandfather was half white. But when you see it in real life, even though, like I said, there was never any question, even though I'm light there was never any question about who I was or what I was going to be. Um, and as they say, if you say something bad, I can remember in high school when I went to all girl Catholic high school, we have a day called Notre Dame Day. Um, I was probably a sophomore or something. We didn't have to wear our uniforms and stuff. And we had this nun, she was an older nun, she was my geometry teacher.

Speaker 1: I'm on the phone. Okay. Um, where she said, I hope y'all have a good day and I don't, I don't care if it rains pitchfork and nigger babies now she might not have known. I was light, yeah, she might not have known if I was black because like I said, there were only, there were probably five in my class for my class out of the four classes through nine through 12. There were probably 20 of us there because there wasn't much more than four or five of us in each class. You know, like I said, she might not have known if I was African American, but I can remember being so upset. And My mother, all of the women in my family, there were seven girls and three boys. Um, but all the women, their mother had died when my aunt jenny was a, was a small baby and stuff.

Speaker 1: And so the women were kind of, how can I put it? They didn't take no shit. Okay. And so when I went home I was really upset. I was, even though I think I'm a strong person, I am emotional, um, and I was very emotional with my mother while my mother hurry up and, and went up to school and stuff and went up there and land

blasted them. And so they kinda treated me a little bit different after that. But her point was this was a nun and so, you know, what are you saying here? And stuff like that. Like I said, she was an older nun or something, but so, you know, when I look at it, I don't care what profession you're from, you're racist and what comes out at, at times. And like I said, I had never ever, ever heard that term before.

Speaker 1: And like I said, I was probably a sophomore. Yeah, it was my sophomore year and it was at the end of the day and I was just devastated, you know, even though, I mean they had said stuff to before because my mother's a little bit darker than I am. My sister a little bit darker than, you know, the black kids would make fun and say your white and your daddy's white, but your mom and them are black and stuff and things. I mean I got teased as a kid, you know, they talk about bullying and now we're back in those days, you know, the black kids tease you too so, you know. But I was devastated. But other than that, I mean trials and tribulations, you know, my dad was a card at times. It could be ugly at times, but he was a provider. I mean I'm one of the lucky ones that I can say my dad was there, but being from the south, he stress good education. Um, I was the first and so he made sure, I mean they struggle to send me the Fisk and back when I went, our class was 1974. Our class was probably the largest class that had ever graduated from Fisk.

Interviewer: And how many people in your class, do you remember?

Speaker 1: Oh, 200 and something.

Interviewer: I was just curious.

Speaker 1: I think it was 200 and something if I'm not mistaken. It seems like there was close to a thousand students because I don't know what it is now. It's pretty low right now, isn't it? Pretty low.

Interviewer: When I was there in the early 2000 faculty staff and students were about 1,000.

Speaker 1: That's what everybody.

Interviewer: Including everybody.

Speaker 1: Okay. Okay. I think we had about 800 students at the time. Like I said, we were over a thousand, but I remember when we graduated they recognized us as being the largest class to ever graduate with fisk was. They had maybe integrated a little bit, well, not integrated, but they had gone out this, you know, instead of being an ivy league and stuff, I think they understood at that time in history that white schools are really looking at black students and stuff like that. So they gave out full scholarships.

Speaker 1: The athletic programs, were pretty healthy because I'm in Memphis now or in the suburb. Collierville. Um, they recruited very heavily in the Memphis area, um, for football and basketball players and stuff like that. So you had, it was a real mix. It was a very diverse group of, of students that some had money, some didn't have money, I mean the kind of old school where everybody's parents were doctors and stuff that kind of was the bunk during that time. Um, but, but my childhood was, you know, like I said, ups and downs. I mean, we didn't go without a meal. My mother was the type that, you know, my dad went to work early in the morning. He was home for know our dinner was on the table.

Speaker 1: I had a great grandmother. My mother's great grandmother on my mother's grandmother lived on the east side of Toledo. She was from Mississippi also. I mean she was really into cats and um, flowers and stuff. And I think some of that, some of that kind of stuck with me and stuff. So, you know, I knew it was there. It probably wasn't until my senior year because of where I was living, you know, Martin Luther King and all of that. I can remember Martin Luther King died when I was in middle school and they let us out of school early and stuff. I can remember when John F Kennedy died, I kinda the same thing. It was kind of a very somber time so I can remember my parents talking about it and stuff because both of them, those people were kind of revered back then. Um, I can remember the black paint. Go ahead.

Interviewer: Um, I was just going to ask you during those, those pivotal times in the civil rights movement, um, do you also remember any of your family or friends, um, being participants? I am aware of those. You said you aware of like MLK’s death and um, um, um, John Kennedy.

Were there other activities that were going on that you were aware of during the time and did any of anyone that you were close with? Um, participate?

Speaker 1: Not that I remember. Not that I regret. I mean, I remember back then in the communities if you had kids and stuff, you know, you had jobs and, and there was a whole lot of time for activism and stuff. I mean, I'm sure there are some, I can remember the Black Panther party starting up probably my junior year and a couple of the guys that I knew who were maybe a little bit older, were very active in that. I got that. I dated at some point maybe my junior year or something. He was very active and there was a Detroit chapter, so we had a lot of spillage from the Detroit chapter and the riots were going on and stuff like that. So. So it became kinda heated. Not that Toledo had any. We didn't have any outbursts, but like when the riots went on in Detroit and stuff like that, now my aunt lived in Los Angeles. She actually lived in Compton and

Speaker 1: she lived right in the middle of the riots. And so I kind of remember her talking about how it was out in Compton and stuff during that time. Um, when we went out there I was younger and that was before that time. So, you know, I can kind of remember what it looked like at that time. But, but once the riots went in, like I said, it was kind of, she said it kind of devastated the whole community because she actually lived on south central in an apartment complex and stuff. And so I kind of remember that I don't remember anybody really being active now I do remember my aunt like I said, was the first black queen. It's got high school in Toledo and she was hung in effigy.

Speaker 1: And I remember my parents, you know, at the end I was younger, um, but I remember my parents making a big to do in it. And so some of maybe what they did, I just don't remember because like I said, they didn't necessarily included in it, but you knew what was going on. Okay. So then what would I knew that they hung in a tree by feg instead. They did not want a black queen. Okay. And I can remember things like things like, like I said, I was probably five or six when we moved into the House that we moved into, but I lived all my life. Like I said, we were the first black family, um, I think they did something to the house or something or tried to do something because it was right on the corner.

Interviewer: They did something to the house?

Speaker 1: Like I said, I was so young, I don't remember, but I remember my parents talking about it and like I said, my dad, he was, he could be crazy when he wanted to. And he kinda got the neighbor straight, but I do remember that even though we lived there, we didn't really. We interacted but we didn't interact. Okay. Once I'm okay middle school, um, I was in girl scouts with the integrated group and stuff like that, but it wasn't. And maybe that's Kinda the way I am that even if you live in that community, it's not like you become very good friends with the people in the community. You kind of guard yourself and like I said, even now I know my neighbors but it's not like I'm going to go over their house or something. So I've always kinda kept. That is somewhat guarded.

Interviewer: Okay. So then, um, oh, my screen just went away. Okay. Um, so during that time, during those, those early formative years for you, what did you consider to be a source of strength during difficult times? What would your family emphasize or utilize your grandmother, your aunt, um, because you said you were a bit younger. Um, so was this something that you saw them utilized in both times?

Speaker 1: Like I said, my parents were, I mean, my, my mother's sisters, all of them were very, very strong. I'm, like I said, part of it could be because their mother died so young and even though my grand, my great grandmother was there, how can I put it? She was older and maybe more southern or whatever and didn't get into things as much. She was, I think a little bit more passive. Um, my grandfather was very, he was a strong man and stuff. And again, like I said, the stories were literally that something happened in Mississippi and they had to send them to Oklahoma. And then eventually when stuff got really bad in Mississippi, my great grandfather brought everybody to Toledo and there was one story that one of my cousins there, because he's been doing research, my part of the family never returned to Mississippi during all those years and he forbid the kids to even go down there and visit any other family members. That's how bad it was at that time. So you know, you, you feel like those struggles. So. So there was something there. My hands were very strong. My father was very strong. I think most of it that

we survived, we survived within the family unit and the trials and tribulations of families went through and stuff and Kinda stayed kind of close knit. Like I said, my family was very close knit.

Speaker 1: Some of them moved away. Um, my aunt, she moved to California and she was young. Pretty much everybody else stayed. Okay. So. So I had that inner circle.

Interviewer: Okay. And were there particular things like songs, scripture, word of advice, family rules. Like you said, your grandfather, even if he didn't share the reason he let you all know you will not be returning to Mississippi. This isn't safe for you. Were there certain family guidelines or even membership club membership, um, that may have also helped in that aided in that strength that you say your family had?

Speaker 1: I can't remember my mother being in a really any club. So my dad, um, they encouraged us, um, girl scouts. I mean, I was pretty active. I was in girl scouts, I was in junior achievement. I was in school plays and stuff like that. Um, but those are things that I wanted to do. So they encouraged it, but my mother really not. Um, I can't say, like I said, when you go back and look at it, I just think it was the strength of the family. I mean, it was you take care of your family. Um, like I said, there was one time when I know we struggled when they had to get laid off for about four or five years, but his backup was he started his own construction company. Um, and, and he was gone a lot because he was doing construction throughout little small towns in Ohio and stuff like that.

Speaker 1: Um, and then eventually got called back onto dolor and stuff and so things were kind of tight during those years. But, but like I said, food was on the table. It was there. I mean we had a set regimen, I mean, my mother and them, she had been brought up in the church, but for whatever reason, over the years she really wasn't that religious, but we went to the church across the street. I went to a Catholic church. It wasn't like they were against it, but for some reason she wasn’t religious as spiritual. But, but her thing was you didn't have to go to church, do good and be right by people. Um, because my mother did help out a lot of people over the years. I can remember people, we had a house that had four bedrooms and my sister and I slept together. And so

there were usually two extra bedrooms pretty much at all times.

Speaker 1: I can remember my cousins going through hard times and my daddy picking them up on weekends because my aunt couldn't feed them and stuff and they'd stay the whole weekend until the kids have to go back to school. I remember people not having a place to stay and my mother and them would take them in and they were like family and they weren't family, so I was always brought up to respect people and my mother had a white and black gay friend that she had met through some years or something, but I don't know, you know, and we all knew they were gay. Um, we all knew that they were black and white, which wasn't that popular at that particular time. But again, we were taught to treat them with the respect. It didn't matter. My mother always used to respect people and treat people good unless they didn't to you. So you, that, you know, my mother, while she was hard in some cases she was still very giving and I think I kind of take after her a little bit because I can be hard at times. But again, I'll do whatever I can for you until you mess over me and then I will cut you understand.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Well tell me this during your growing up, um, and this can include your time at Fisk as well. Um, can you share with me what you would consider your most significant personal trials?

Speaker 1: That's weird. Um, because a lot of stuff. I mean, my mother didn't push me. I don't know if I had to drive, but I had certain things I was interested in. Um, I got awards out artists even though that's not what I did. I was the affirmative action officer at the university Memphis. So don't ask me how, how I got into that, but I have an MA in art, but that's what I got into. But I was really. And everybody in my family was kind of artistic. My uncle was a commercial artist and he did his, he had his own company and stuff, but everybody was kind of hard. So I always had artists, but probably in the seventh or eighth grade I want to stay competition and got to go to Columbus to be recognized by the governor for one of my posters that I did. Um, I had, uh, I had the lead in the senior class play even though I was black, you know, I did that as a lead in the senior class play at Fisk, you know, they laugh at me now and stuff, but I

was the basileus and anti basileus and head knocker from my sorority.

Speaker 1: I look back and I'm like, how did they pick me? And to this day I'm not sure how I was picked for any of those things, but that it is, um, maybe I'm a little bit more humble than I think I am. Um, I started two chapters one at Washington state and one at Tennessee Technological University on my sorority for the undergrads because I was on the faculty on both of those places. Um, came to Memphis. Um, I was the affirmative action officer for while I was at Tennessee Tech University for nine years where I did affirmative action and also was a tenured faculty member. They are, um, and then I came to Memphis, University of Memphis and I was there for 25 years as the affirmative action officer. I think my greatest accomplishment, seriously, it's helping people who were getting ready to get screwed by the system and they really hadn't done anything but there was no one there to talk to them at the university and kind of lay out what you had to do.

Speaker 1: Um, I had a kid the other day, well he's not a kid anymore. He's a, he's a, he's a grown man and he works at Fedex. He's logistic manager as an ex now. He posted something on Linkedin last week and it was big brothers and big sisters and I think he very active in that and it was bow ties and sneakers or something and he hit a ball. He had a ball in his hand and I looked at him because I knew him probably in the nineties or whatever. And um, I said, there's the smile that I remember when you read the university because he was a student worker and he wrote back and literally I had forgotten about this. He wrote back and he said, thanks. He said, you know what, I was young and dumb but you saved me during that time because he did something really stupid and I can't remember what it is now, but they were going to fire him.

Speaker 1: That was his livelihood. He really needed a job. I think he, it was, his mother was single and he was on a scholarship and it was just a little extra money for him and stuff like that. And, and, and the white folks in the group were really kind of getting ready to mess over him and, and I stuck my neck out and say, don't, you know. And like I said, I don't remember it, but as I see people now that I went to, I went to a funeral of a guy that was there when I got there and he died the other

day and you know, everybody came up to me and they said, we really miss you really miss you. They said you were the only one who would stand up for people and we don't have that anymore. So that might be my greatest achievement. Even though I was looking, I wasn't going to take no stuff. But I do think I helped people who are going to be fired who I'd Gotten Screwed Sexual Harris Mentor a lot of sexual harassment complaints that I dealt with, um, of students who have been harassed by faculty members. You know, when I got to the university, even in 1986, you would think there would be gobs and gobs of people at the University of Memphis. They were, five of us are professional level positions.

Speaker 1: Fast Five. And um, so I went in there and had to really struggle. I mean, probably the only people in any kind of positions were the custodians and they were treating the custodians like dogs and stuff like that, so I think that's probably my greatest attribute. Willing, truthfully, if I look back.

Interviewer: Sounds like you're an advocate for people particularly. Yeah?

Speaker 1: Yeah. If you messed up, I'm going to tell you you messed up and I'm not going to take this stuff off to you, but if I truly, if I truly believe that you were willing to turn yourself around and do the right stuff and listened to me, I'd go, I stick my neck out for you. I stick my neck out for you because nobody else was going to do it back then.

Interviewer: I think more of you are needed in a few universities.

Speaker 1: Like I said, I saw Karen little lessons. She's now the provost and stuff and she said, I miss you. The other thing she said, she miss me. She said, you know what? You had an innate knack of being able to size up people really quick like at the first meeting and she said, and I would always say because Karen was always Kinda nicey nicey and that adapt and I said something wrong with that one and she said and, and, and 100 percent of the time it would come back and that person would be the way. So I think there's something innate in me about. I can read people pretty well. So if I can read you and thought you presented that, stick my neck out for you. I stick my neck.

Speaker 1: We actually are trying to get our Memphis Fisk club together and we had a meet and greet for the students and you know, I know how parents get. I was at the university, they take them back in 1970. When I went to Fisk, I had never visited fisk. Not once, because my parents back then my parents didn't have any money to send me to Nashville and take me to Nashville. I just Kinda knew. I really didn't have anybody there because nobody from my school and at 12:00 at night they put me on a greyhound bus with my foot locker. Oh Wow. I got there early in the morning. I caught a cab with foot locker and never turned back and the first person I met was the chick from New York City or name was Carol Covington.

Speaker 1: She actually was a Sar mine. He became a star online, but she looked at me and Kinda in that New York had a big Afro when Afro's popular. She looked at me and she said, welcome to this baby and kind of never, never regretted anything after that. But that's the difference in that. I mean they literally put me on a bus to a place go and I was literally, I was 17 then because I didn't turn 18 until November or he'll. So somebody in my family did something. Right. I mean the times were different. Yes, the times were different. But even back then, there was something that they trusted me, that I was mature enough that they knew I knew how to take care of stuff. Um, and like I said, I didn't have any problems after that. I just never went back there. Same thing when I went to Grad school, I didn't know what I was going to do when I graduated from this and so I was kind of at home and during the summer or hooks called me, he had been my professor and he called me at home and he said, you want to go to Grad school?

Speaker 1: And I said, yeah, but I don't know. He said, Washington state university or you give your graduate assistantships and your slides to them and send that back. So I was accepted. So again, 74 went out to pullman, Washington and it was a graduate assistant out there. So Ashley was supposed to be back in this because driscoll and hooks wanted to hire me. After I got my Mfa, they had called me to see if I was on schedule in [inaudible] 76. I was supposed to go back and fisk and be on the art faculty and that's when this started having financial troubles and stuff and they couldn't hire me. So I ended up going home.

My life definitely would've been different had I not gone to fisk and Fisk was my first time leaving my mother ever. So I, right.

Speaker 1: I'm afraid. I mean, like I said, I had been in junior achievement and I went to nature conferences at Indiana University. I mean, like I said, my parents, I think they raised me a certain way to be mature. I knew how to take care of money. I mean I wasn't worldly as some people at fisk. I mean, because my girlfriend and now my college roommate actually is in Memphis and we'd laugh now because we weren't, we were mature but we were somewhat naive and when we got there were some were as we call worldly girls there, there was a. and we were kind of like own because when I went to, I mean there were people from everywhere I made. My best girlfriend is from Los Angeles. I mean we had Chicago, New York or down south. I was from Ohio. Cynthia was from Memphis.

Speaker 1: Uh, one of my other girlfriends was from San Francisco, so it was just an array of all people, all backgrounds, some rich, some poor. But we all got along and it was interesting to me today when I go back to my reunions and stuff and, and I laugh about it. Like I said, we were middle class. I mean we had house, we had food on our table but we didn't have a whole lot of money and stuff like that. You know, my, my dad was a laborer at, at a decent company, like, you know, with, with the car companies and stuff. But we work, let's just say a couple of my girlfriends had fathers as doctors and stuff like that and had money and stuff and you kind of knew that, but when I go back, our 45th year class reunion is next year. When you go back, none of them, some of them did, but on the whole, the ones who had a little bit more going into it really didn't do anything anymore than some of us who were from less economically, uh, um, the network [inaudible].

Speaker 1: So could it be a sign of the times that during that time blacks couldn't get into everything that they can get into now? But I don't think so. I think those of us that went there did, that didn't have as much privilege as some of the other blacks. There was a strive for us, you know, and like I said, most of us are smart kids. I mean, we, we were all kind of smart kids and we knew what we had to do to succeed in life. I think they'll hold that mixture of, of population.

Interviewer: Um, I actually haven't been back in about five years, but in the time I was there and we still had that mix of population. So I found out about fisk from. Actually, it's funny, I'm wondering if he's in your class that I can't remember his name. Anyway, a doctor came to my high school class and he was a class of us.

Speaker 1: Have some year, 1970. And where does he live? And he wasn't very happy. Kentucky. What part of me is near Cincinnati in Louisville, Kentucky. What about for minutes? The Melbourne's, was it keith and his brother?

Interviewer: I don't remember, but it wasn't African American gentleman older and he said he graduated in the seventies because I remember thinking I wasn't even born yet. He's keeping his brother near live in Cincinnati. Both of them are doctors. Keith is very active in the alumni association. Keith was in my class, his brother graduated two years before it. It probably was the Melvins and by Louisville not being that far from Cincinnati to go down there because Keith is very active. It's probably the only matter of fact, one of the girls in the club, um, she had just gone up there. She's a younger girl. I can't remember when she said she graduated.

Speaker 1: She graduated in 1997, 98 or something and they had gone to the reunion this year and they said, we think we met somebody, a whole bunch of people and they said this Dennis from DC and this guy from DC. I said, Chris and I, and she said, you're crazy as they can be. And she said, but they were so much a year. We all had got with us at Christmas to p to p's is big. He's a big time Dennis. I mean we've had my class. Several people are doctors. My roommate, my first roommate is a doctor. We've had judges, I mean a little bit, a lot of people in the education, a lot of teachers, several principals. We just have a whole arrangement of lots of folks who did lots of things.

Speaker 1: That's what I loved about it. Are You from Louisville, Kentucky? My first roommate, Peter's route quarrels is from Louisiana. That's where she's from. She lives in Ohio now. Yeah, youngstown. But she's from. She was from Louisville. Yep. Matter of fact, it was her. Louisville had a connection back then because I think it was two or three of them from, from Louisiana and there were

three of us and we all got together when we got there. Yeah. Yeah. I have very fond memories of my time at this. Taught me a lot. I think all of us, I think all of us, I think all of us here. Yeah, it doesn't matter if it was 2000, it was the seventies. I was a little bit different because we were coming on the heels of the civil rights stuff. Um, they had just burned down one of the dorms, like the year before we got there, they had burned down the dorm and so there was a line of, okay, it was, it was kind of mixed groups.

Speaker 1: Do you have a militant group that was still kind of in the black power, but we did get black power while we were there. I mean, we were just, I'm on facebook and bunches of us. That's how we keep up with each other and when it was announced that she died today, we all got on and reminisce our freshman year, second semester she, stevie wonder, last poets, the chambers brothers and I can't remember. It was about five or other group did a benefit for Fisk at the war memorial and it was some riff about her std window. Stevie wonder was more popular back then and they told her she had 15 minutes go. Stevie was the final act. They told her she and she wasn't happy. Huh? Sister stayed on our. The concert went about and we look at all of us were going back and they said, okay, where was.

Speaker 1: And we said, well, war memorial came back. She's in Chicago. I think tickets were flat out half a year. I remember none of us had any money back then. I said we were alone in each other money to do it and stuff, and if somebody said one mayor rift between her and Steve, even though we free and she wanted to be the headliner, earth wind and fire our sophomore year and somebody backed out and they were our homecoming thing and in that crazy jam and they were kind of way out. Uh, they were, they were new because they were from Memphis, but they were really kind of a little bit ahead of their time they want. So, so we had that. I mean, Elizabeth Catlett, who was the, um, uh, she was an exile in Michigan, one of the greatest African American artists and stuff around.

Speaker 1: We had her for the exhibit. I mean, I took a class from this guy named Bogle who does American film. He's like one of the authorities on black female. He can, he comes in once a month and give us classes and stuff. People don't understand. David Driscoll was there. I was

taught by David Driscoll. He is the one, he's in Africa. He's still living up in Maine and stuff. So goodness, um, oh, what's his name? Hank Aaron's daughter was, was a year after us. She was in our class. I mean we had, we had Nikki Giovanni, we had Angela Davis, I mean all of the powers. So where we militant we probably were, we probably were because we were feeding off of that. But how can I put it? We were just more refined in our militancy, you know, John Lewis had just graduated. I mean he didn't graduate but he was at fisk during that time. Now I think after I left they got a little bit more activists and stuff because I think John Lewis was there. Um, Jesse Jackson, I mean, yeah, Jesse Jackson was running for something and so I think he came and stuff, but we all kind of had that history because you had a lot of black faculty members there who were part of that and had friends and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Wow. So, I have to ask you this and this will be my final question. Um, and then now we'll just leave it open for you to share whatever you want because I'm enjoying this conversation. But with the way things are today, and some would even call it a new civil rights movement. We have these young African Americans of all shades of all backgrounds wanting to shun being even considered or labeled an African American. Um, I have had people say that's not my story. There is no discrimination is. No. That was so long ago. Um, within, on the same, in the same time.

Interviewer: Because you have firsthand seen some of these things in and it sounds like you are natural advocate, it sounds like you naturally reach out to people and help them to see a potential that even they don't see in themselves. What kind of practical application. Um, I, I don't even want to say advice because it's so overrated and um, but, but actual practical application, those things that in your mind when you see your grandchildren doing thought the foolish and you think if y'all just only knew what are those things? If you could share them? Um, what would you say? What would your practical application be?

Speaker 1: Well, you know, the first thing you talked about is people saying, you know, you've got a lot of interracial people. Now, you know, I've got friends that I went to college with. Um, one of my good friends is from, she's in Columbus and she works at Iowa State University.

	She's in library. Both of her sons had married a white women. And we were talking at the reunion and stuff and firms from Virginia and Virginia as I researched, my father's background was really special with blacks and stuff like that. I mean, it, it was really special. And so from kind of comes from that. And she says she tries to tell her, her, her sons and stuff don't ever get to mesmerized with this because in the end they gonna call you the n word if they get mad at you, you know, I see people getting away from it.
Interviewer:	Well, Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate this and I will notify everyone that participated when it is done and published and if you'd like a copy, I have no problem sending that to you. Thank you so much and you have a good day. You too. Bye Bye. All right, bye bye.

Interview 2

Interviewer:	All right. Okay. Can you start by telling me your birthday?
Speaker 2:	My birthday is 7 -26 -1951.
Interviewer:	Okay. And how old are you today?
Speaker 2:	I am 67
Interviewer:	Well where were you born?
Speaker 2:	I was born in Memphis, Tennessee.
Interviewer:	Okay. And you were also raised in Memphis as well?
Speaker 2:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Okay. All right, well I'm going to get started with the first question. Those are just some demographic questions can you describe your childhood to me a little bit?
Speaker 2:	I'm sorry, say that again.
Interviewer:	Okay. Can you describe your childhood to me?

Speaker 2: Yes. Uh, my childhood and I would describe it. It was ideal by the standards, but I was aware of at the time and still kind of agree with it. I had plenty of, I was in a neighborhood full of kids and we have fun and games and, it was neighborhood friends home. It's comfortable. Yeah. Good meals and caring parents and I had no known financial problems and I know a lot of people say that, uh, you know, they may have been in a type of equation, but we really didn't know it at a very comfortable childhood.

Speaker 2: Let me tell you this. I am sorry. I do, I have prepared as I do have these things, but if you would like me to send you a copy of them that my transcribing is.

Interviewer: Oh Wow. Okay. Okay. Okay. I'm sure. But, um, uh, do you mind? So just going through a couple of them here on the phone?

Speaker 2: I don't mind going through the whole thing, but if you happen to miss something that I'm seeing in your transcribing, I do have a copy.

Interviewer: Oh, that would be amazing. Thank you. Yes, I would appreciate it. So tell me about the community you grew up around. Um, what it was their extended family. Um, was it a mixed cultural background?

Speaker 2: Little bit of both. I in the morning gardens public housing community that people commonly refer to now as the project. And in the morning gardens was one of four projects in south Memphis area. The, a 38126 zip code. Oh. And at this point now, I really am in a recent years, the 38126 zip code has been called the poorest metropolitan zip code so in the fifties and sixties I'm on guard. It was a mixture of single parent family households and two parent families. Now a household now in my unit that I lived in, there were about 10 apartments, but was example when I say to parents, family house, so about five or six of those 10 units for it were led by two parent household. So it was really, um, it wasn't your typical project that you saw years later?

Speaker 2: Maybe 20 to 25 years later. So, uh, my, my household was headed by my mother who was married but separated at the time and really for years we moved into the morning garden when I was two years old and moved out when I was 14. My grandmother came to

live with us shortly after we moved into the morning gardens and she helped care for me. My grandmother had moved from Brownsville, Tennessee, which is about an hour from Memphis after her husband, my grandfather passed. So I am an only child on both sides. My Mom and my dad's side, but again in the neighborhood and uh, it was just so many friends around neighborhood full of just friendly people. And we played outdoors, I would say most of the day and into the night we play hopscotch, kickball, dodge ball, jump rope. My favorite was hide and seek and that we also did girly things.

Speaker 2: My, my next door neighbor, like paper dolls and things like that. So I just really, I have just fond memories of that community. But I wanted to talk about, I guess two things in particular on that one. My uh, I had one neighbor who was a teenager and her name was what I said, we're not calling names. Um, she really was a storyteller in our community to later on she became a local popular, a storyteller, but she would take us kids sitting on the steps and tell us all kind of little Spanish, the stores and she'd have us in those stories as to different people. And I would just be for our turn when we will be almost like star wars if like the Disney thing. I mean it was, we just waited for that. So that was, that was one highlight and the other had to do with just I, I described my three, one, two, zip code and everything.

Speaker 2: But it produced a lot of, excuse me, not the people that went on to be great achievers know my next door neighbor for a few weeks with Maurice, white earth, wind and fire. So yeah. So he was about eight years older than me and my earliest recollection of him next door neighbor knows the musician type. He was always just run it out the house. He's always been an energy with his band uniform head into play drums with the btw booker t Washington and star a high school. So he lived with my point. I'm getting to on that one if he lived with his grandma is kind of adopted grandmother at the time. As soon as he moved, graduated actually moved, relocated to Chicago with his mom and, and the other family was. But I want to talk about his grandmother because there was one incident then with her that I just, this stands out in my because that's pretty much all of us were poor I would say based on the poverty statistics and Mrs Robinson has been way down on the chart.

Speaker 2: But I was uh, I was a pretty good. I was, I was a good student in elementary and throughout. But when it came to my report cards, I would just kinda take it around. I call it. I tell my friends now a pimp my report card for Undergrad, I went to Ms. Robertson and I knew she didn't have much money. It was just one day she was just the type to give you inspiration and I gave her what part of this, the fruit juice kind of in a wheelchair lights or something, and I kind of stood back and she had her head bowed down and kind of lift up and the words that she gave me and I can't really remember what they were, but just this encouragement, inspiration and just gave me a lot I hope and I tell people, I said I, I didn't get a penny from her, but I felt like I had got a million dollars and I, I lived on those inspiration. So, uh, that's, that's kind of the, who is the lovely childhood that I, that I do recall.

Interviewer: That's a wonderful memory. There's a wonderful memory. During that time when you were growing up, were you aware of the civil rights movement of their activity and things that were going on?

Speaker 2: Absolutely. Because of the history of Memphis. Memphis is a highly racially polarized city, so a black and white. I was keenly aware of the movement but quite so. So um, yes, I did a lot of participating in the civil which gives me in the civil rights movement. Okay. And others, and I can ask them to get into that later on, but just some notes I had written, but other than the Memphis participation in the activity though I'm going to talk about later on. I did. I read the book as I guess when I was 12 or 13. The book was called the Long Shadow of little rock and it was eight, and then again in my neighborhood we didn't, there was not a library, but there was a public library truck that came every one day out of every week. I think it was Tuesday. But um, and I will go there and I will get that book and I read that book over and over and over.

Speaker 2: So you in. So the long shadow of little rock had to do with the central high students I think was back in 1957 and Ms. Bates was kind of like their chaperone, so I knew those students and Mrs a faith personally through reading the book over and over the decades later they had a 50th anniversary and I would see them all together and that's a pretty much they Ernest Green, his personality and what things that had happened.

That book really resonated with me a lot about the civil rights struggle and what was going on and this was like 57, but when I was reading it would have been like 63 so that. Okay. My response on that.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. And you said you were very active in the civil rights movement. How was, how were you active and does that include like your family, your parents? I'm close friends. How did you participate? Yeah. Okay, great.

Speaker 2: Not my family, but myself and my friends and what was going on in and Memphis in 1958 was the sanitation strike by the sanitation workers in Memphis. And um, after school there were, by this time I was in high school, I was doing high school at Booker t Washington high school, which I would call a btw, would just a short distance. It was a short walk downtown from the high school and the march started at Clayborn Temple, And uh, then there was a short walk from there, all of them downtown. So after school, a lot of evenings we would go and participate in the, in the sanitation strike. And this, these march took place before Martin Luther King. Dr Martin Luther King came and participated and then let you know, did so this been going on for quite a few a month. And now I do, with how one song where we were saying all up and down the street.

Speaker 2: So we had plenty of songs. But one in particular, I have gone over my mind and have out of the blue, it was just, you know, it would just come to my mind and I was thinking, but I pretty much had to a two versus two stanzas, stanzas that I had remembered. So I contacted another friend of mine who also march with me and asked her about some feelings that I couldn't remember one name and uh, I have done, you know, I prepared for this because this is me through and through this right issue, so I'm going to entertain you with this song that we play for them, but it's a little bit funny, but I'm going to set the tone for because we were caused know high school students. And at that point we made a lot of people coming through like date a Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown and a number other than that.

Speaker 2: And the garbage had been piling up in the streets. And the mayor, Henry Loeb was not gonna get a strikers an extra penny. And they had terrible working conditions. So this is H rap brown is come into the room, round

broom, broom, Brown. We go on a tear, his damn boom. Oh my new stove blitz to eating those barbecues. Boom, boom, boom bap, garbage out in the street, boom, boom, boom. Now we're going to pilot it and reload the boom, boom, boom. That boy a black boy. This is the hour watches on yet yet a black boom, boom, boom, boom. That's it.

Speaker 2: That's it. So I only needed one word that was within the name was in it. I called my friend who is now, she marched with me. She's in Greensboro, North Carolina at her doctorate and had done her thesis maybe about 10 years ago. She had worked at North Carolina a and t for a while. She's in public relations now. But to my surprise, she had only had two stanzas. He remember the other two. So that's how much men in this racially charged atmosphere. And so yeah. So that's. Those are my comments on my participation. Wow.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. So during that time to realize that they didn't even want a budget, penny had to make you upset to hear the struggles of the people. Um, what did you consider your source of strength during those difficult times?

Speaker 2: Well, yeah, you, you, uh, so right. We would only ever raised and what was going on, but funny enough that was one life kind of. And then on the other hand we just lived a normal lives that, that we're really still kind of Nice. So I would say just doing. And I'm reading from, you know, on your time period in 1952, 1970, but even just say 60 to 70. We're pretty much on the family situation. My mother, my grandmother provided a comfortable environment, you know, and love. So that was, that was a big thing. My father, who was not he was not in the household, he was not an absentee father is three times know, glad with them routinely to Thursday and Saturday morning. So he was much in my life. So that was, you know, had that unit going on my church. I spent a lot of time at a one up in church and those older members really invested a lot of your time and love and so that was pretty much my second home. It's a mess and Missionary Baptist Church Church plays Sunday school choir when you usher a harmony adventis a lot of activities to other main areas and one I'll say the dedicated school teacher. Just.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 2: Yeah, just that a lot, you know, into a, in one in particular. One of my instructors, they borrow excellent by my junior year, introduced us to a that African American writers, a Harlem Renaissance Writers and James Baldwin and Richard Wright and uh, all of those. So that may kind of made us who we are and some of the books we read in particular Richard Wright and I guess my mom was like, why they are, why are you reading books? But these would have pushed me to raise. So that was one thing and the other, excuse me, and I'm high and I had a, I was injured, I guess, introduced to a world where I could possibly achieve a lot more than what was going on and what happened in, in the seventh grade, a group of maybe 30 of us and in each of two classes were placed in what we call the advanced placement program.

Speaker 2: So we were learning environment and we stayed together from seventh grade to the junior. I'm sure it was some type of experiment that was going on within the Memphis city school system, which no one really explained to you, but we were, we were just kind of as, as, as, as far as our curriculum, we got a chance to do this calculus and they all just, just advanced study. So, and we were kind of treated a little bit differently in a way in terms of what we would, uh, that would equip us with to, to do better later on in life. So, uh, that's, that's pretty much what I have on that particular question.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. So this is actually elaborating a little bit on that one. Are there any words of advice or um, like the song you shared earlier, things like that, our family rules that stand out to you in particular, your childhood that you haven't already shared? Yeah.

Speaker 2: Well, yes. Now at my high school btw again, we were in the three. I wanted six zip code, but we never thought of ourselves as being inferior and one real reflect back. Instead we had a motto at the school that we lead and others follow and that, yeah, that was ingrained in us as far as we are leaders and um, I would say we just had you, I mean, you should hear even say it today because we had hoops but uh, for now. So I like to say that we were black and proud even before James Brown helped us define it in those terms.

Interviewer: I like that. Okay. Can you share with me one of your most significant personal triumph?

Speaker 2: Okay. Oh, okay. I'm becoming a guy. I had read about this university and I wanted a college matriculation there that include it. Well, I wanted a college matriculation probably anywhere that included a black experience, but I had heard so much of so many good things about Fisk University and, and the graduates and, and it just, just mounds of accolades. I could at that point I could have gone because of the advanced placement program in and kind of how I tested it out on a lot of things. I could have gone to the University of Chicago and several other schools, but I wanted a good social life and I wanted a degree and I said that this did not disappoint me at all. So yeah, when I got there that was the introduction of Web Dubois, the talented 10th and I found, you know, those people, those types there. And also the Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez writers, poets, but the black bogies all around and, and high achievers in general. So it was just an ideal setting and honestly I do play a lot in, in my daily press. I just thank the Lord for Fisk University and that was a wonderful experience. Wonderful.

Interviewer: Yes. Yeah. Okay. Um, now, um, can you share your greatest disappointment? You can focus on maybe the civil rights movement during that time or even in your time at Fisk.

Speaker 2: It's going to be the civil rights movement and it was the assassination of Dr King that was, you know, that enraged US support and um, didn't, did not break that spirit. It just, it just made us more determined to, to move ahead. But of course that was the greatest disappointment that I could think of.

Interviewer: Okay. So today we have what some people consider the new civil rights movement. what would be that word of advice if you could share with millions of young people that wisdom, that practical theology, that pertinent information, they always say hindsight is 20, 20. If you could tell those young people today. Listen, I've learned it. I've lived it. What would you say?

Speaker 2: I would say they need to read their history and they need to read about stuff that people in the decade before to see what they had gone through to get to where we are today. And to utilize your tools. You utilize your resources, utilize your skills and talents to help to build up the, uh, black community. Don't get so

involved in the. A lot of these looks. The little minor things to social media type things and the degrading song and so forth. Listened to the song and the error in the sixties were black women and relationships built up in a positive, not what you all are calling each other women calling girls, calling himself that in guys refer to them too as well, but get your education and think about doing something positive, not well for your family above the come in to owe me some employment. It felt so that you won't be stealing and, and, and, and taking people live and take, take life seriously. I mean just knocking folks off of selling them short. So it's, that's, that's some of what I would tell them.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. That is actually my final question. I wanted to ask if you had anything else you'd like to share?

Speaker 2: Well, I, I just shared a little bit about my self in terms of what, how was molded and I say that the museum and my black experience both positive and negative molded me and I'm grateful for it and I just tied into Fisk University and just what a, what a, what I did after that. But in tying it in with some other thing. But after receiving my degree in economics from Fisk University in 1973, I began a 30 year career with the, a red federal regulatory agency, the Office of the comptroller for 30 years. Like I said, not second to that as a national bank examiner, A. I also received my MBA degree from Howard University in 1983. And in between those times I also work for a few years as a financial analyst or the Timken company. You Canton, Ohio. One of my highlights of my career with the OCC was my last three years before I retired in 2008.

Speaker 2: I was a watch it enough to have receiving assignment in New York City, uh, assigned to the retail credit examined and team at JP Morgan Chase the, there I work right in our team was, we had rented space in the Fox News building of all places now. But I saw those, there was on a basis, but that wasn't necessarily the highlight was actually residing in an, a, in a, in an apartment, in a brand new building blocks in Harlem, revitalized Harlem. And so I would say three years. So walk those same streets in my Harlem Renaissance as in a walk and I've truly enjoyed that. So that a nation

Interviewer: you have reached a level of success, not very many young brown girls like me and my friends get to see in, in say it face to face. That's inspiring. That's very encouraging. When I came to Fisk I said if I finish this degree, that degree, because the only thing that was required of me with the finish high school my freshman year, my advisor at Cisco herself said you will get a Phd. And when she said that, um, at the time I didn't even know what the PhD was or what it stood for. So when I hear these, yes, yes. She was very instrumental in and I was like, no, I'm not. I don't know. I'm not that smart. I'm not, I'm not going to do that. So it's encouraging to hear just how successful you are and how active you were and to be able to walk the streets of the Harlem Renaissance. Wow. I've never been to New York City, so. Wow. Okay.

Speaker 2: Congratulations to you is with Kudos.

Interviewer: Thank you. Thank you. It's been a Journey. Yes. What? Hopefully this will be finished in May 2019 is the hoped for graduation date. Okay, well you posted on it. Absolutely. I will let you know when I am finished and when everything is typed up and transcribed and if you want a copy then I will gladly send you a copy over, but I'll keep your information so that you can stay in contact of how the progress.

Speaker 2: Okay. I sure will and I will send you this word document of mine.

Interviewer: Yes. Thank you so much. I really appreciate that. It's been a pleasure. You have a great day. Thank you for your time.

Speaker 2: All. Bye. Bye.

Interview 3

Interviewer:	All right. Okay. So, um, did you get a copy of the questions as well as the consent form?
Speaker 3:	Copy of the question? No, I don't believe I did.
Interviewer:	No? Oh my goodness. I'm so sorry. I was trying to send out the questions so that way you would have time to review them beforehand. Um, if there's any questions that you come across that you need more time to think on or you just don't want to answer at any time we'll move right on.
Speaker 3:	Alright, let me just say that now as I'm looking through here. Yes, I didn't see them attached to the now I got it. I got the consent form and truly for me, this is last two, three weeks has been the busiest I've had in many, many years. So I didn't even catch it. If I had, I would have um, you know, contacted you. I apologize about that.
Interviewer:	I'm just gonna Start with some basic demographic questions before I actually go into some more open ended questions about your, um, your childhood and growing up and any civil rights, um, the effects of rights may or may not have had on that side. Okay. Okay. So could you start by telling me what's your birthday is
Speaker 3:	seven slash 31 slash 49.
Interviewer:	Okay. And as of today, how old are you?
Speaker 3:	Sixty nine.
Interviewer:	Okay. And where were you born and raised?
Speaker 3:	Um, my dad was in the military, so I was born on a military base in Seville, Spain. Uh, but we spent time in Pennsylvania and California and Maryland. Okay.
Interviewer:	So could you describe your childhood to me? Just a bit.
Speaker 3:	I had a very happy childhood. My mother was a stay at home mom. Um, again, my dad was in the military, so I was surrounded always by my mother or my father or

both. Um, I had a brother and sister, two sisters and a brother actually. Um, so it was full of fun. Every time I, whenever I think about it I think of fun and happiness and togetherness. So I had a, I had an awesome childhood. Okay, great. And the community you grew up and you said you did a lot of traveling, but because my dad was in the military, we lived on military base, so we lived in, we lived with people that, we've spent quite a bit of time with.

Speaker 3: Um, it was racially mixed. There wasn't a lot of black people, but we weren't necessarily the only ones, a mixed population growing up. It was, it was mixed. It wasn't highly mixed. But, um, I, I tell you, I never really, even though I looked different from the other kids, I never felt that I was different and, and I'm not sure if that's because I'm, I was treated so well at home and I felt so well loved, so it didn't matter or if it just wasn't obvious to me. But as a child I grew up just like every other child. On the street I had white friends, I had black friends and um, it was just a very harmonious upbringing.

Interviewer: Okay. So were you aware of the activities of the civil rights movement in your upbringing?

Speaker 3: No. No, I was not aware. I didn't learn about them until I was older.

Interviewer: Okay. Were you ever active participant in any of the civil rights movement, activities, marches, friends or family if not yourself?

Interview 3 No. No, no. I think because my dad was in the military, he felt something he shouldn't be involved in and uh, my mother definitely wouldn't want to ruffle feathers in that manner.

Inerviewer: Okay. Okay. Um, so during difficult times in your upbringing, what did you consider a source of strength? Your main source of strength?

Speaker 3: Always my religion and my fam, my family, when my parents were alive, they're both gone now, but when they were alive, they of course were my sources. I could always go to them for anything, and get that support or a question answered or some direction. But even when

they were here, the religion that, that mostly my mother instilled in men and made. I'm a part of our lives was what has been my source of my strength.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Okay. You mentioned your religion first. Can you tell me if there were any specific tools or sources from your religion, whether it be a song, the scripture, a word of it by a pep talk?

Speaker 3: Well, it's in general the faith to know that I'm not alone, that whatever I'm going through I'm God is with me, that I have the strength and conviction to get through anything and that, that same faith I views. I use it today. I used the just recently, you know, it's, it's, it's what gets me through the hard times. Okay. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you share with me from your upbringing, one of your most significant triumph personal triumphs growing up?

Speaker 3: I think, Overcoming bullying. I was bullied so it was ridiculous. When I think of what the kids. I work in a school system now, so when I see bullying, I see what they go through and I think about what I went through. I realized how much I overcame. I was tall, I spoke pretty good English, so when I, when I moved from the, I'm a mixed racial group, neighborhood and, and, and all, and then my dad got out of the military, we moved to an all black area. So then I became different, you know, they were like, where did she come from? Why is she dressing like this? Why is she speaking like this? I didn't belong. So it was a terrible time and I didn't understand it. Why do people that look like me don't like me? Why did they treat me so bad? So it was all full time and everyday I was bullied. I was called names, I was ostracized and I got through all of that based on two things. One, because I knew I was loved, I knew it, you know, nothing could tell me I was not loved and because I knew I was loved, that gave me a sense of solid, but also I knew that God was with me and I had my feet and I knew that if I just hung in there, it was going to work itself out.

Interviewer: Can you share one of your greatest disappointment growing up

Speaker 3: that people of color treat each other that way, that they don't, that they don't see us as all being in this thing

together instead of them seeing me as one of them, they they reason to ostracize and mistreat me and, and, and it's happened with our children as well. My husband and I have two daughters and we've brought them up a particular way on. They speak a particular way they read, they go to this concert or like different kinds of music. They have a well rounded a idea of what the world is and they didn't fit very well into their school either and they were ostracized and ms.dot, dot, dot. And one of them, her nickname was Oreo, you know, and they. And they would bring up a movie. Oh Erica, have you seen such and such movie? You haven't, you're not black. You know, that's unfortunate. Yeah. And why? Because she spoke correctly because she had both parents, which you know, at her house. I'm really. So that to me is very disappointing.

Interviewer: I would agree. I would certainly agree. And this is actually my final question today in the age of, um, so much turmoil and some would even consider it to be a new civil rights movement. The year I moved to south Florida was also the year that Trayvon Martin was killed and I had never, never seen or heard anything like it. The uproar that it brought a was baffling. It's something I'll never forget. Um, and I know that the old saying is hindsight is 2020. If you could speak to this generation and give them a practice, a pertinent information, a lesson learned, and you know that it would affect them in some way. What would you say to them if you had their ear, what will be that, that message you will want to share? I think that time and effort needs to be made for, for them all to know who they are, where we come from.

Speaker 3: They don't teach us that in school. They don't know. When you get to college you might take an elective and you might find out about African American history before slavery. You know, everything we do here kind of starts with slavery. And that seems to be the thing that they want to tell us about all the time, but what we don't learn is about who we were before that and where we come from. And I think if more people of color knew where they come from, we could have a decrease in some of this safe hatred, self hatred that I see happen or when I watch the news, you know, some of the skin color issues that we have, some of the shootings that we have, some of the loss of hope or really no hope at all. And I think if they knew better

where they came from, they could lift their heads up and stand street and then they would have the energy and the strength that's necessary to fight the good fight and to keep pushing and instead of just falling into what's easy. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the civil rights movement or um, what has molded you to be who you are today?

Speaker 3: No, I think I've, I think I've answered what you've asked. I think it's family and I think it's my faith and without one of those one or other, other two that I wouldn't be the person that I am today because those are the things that have kept me strong in times of need when I was mistreated by students at school. I, you know, I still had a smile on my face and teachers were asked me, why are you, why are you so happy? I'm loved. I know I'm loved. I know my parents loved me and my cousins and my sister and brother, you know, I know God loves me and it just, you know, teachers would ask me that all the time if they had to correct me. I didn't take it personal. I took the correction and I'm gone and they said, why? Why are you able to do that? Because I know who I am because I know I'm loved and that's what I think a lot of our kids.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Absolutely. thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it and that is actually the end of my questions.

Speaker 3: Oh, well good luck to you.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interview 4

Interviewer:	Hope so I'm going to start with just some basic demographic information. Tell me your birthday.
Speaker 4:	Yes. March 30, first 1949.
Interviewer:	Okay, and as of today, how old are you?
Speaker 4:	I am 69. Praise the Lord.
Interviewer:	And where were you born and raised?
Speaker 4:	I was born in Jackson, Tennessee. I'm one in Jackson, Tennessee. Madison County. Okay.
Interviewer:	Okay. And you also raised in Jackson as well?
Speaker 4:	Yes, born and raised. Born, raised and educated here in Jackson.
Interviewer:	Okay. So can you tell me a little bit about your childhood and describe the community you grew up in?
Interviewer:	you know, I grew up right outside of Fort Knox. I grew up right outside. So I understand what you mean when you say that. Okay. Um, so in your day to day ordinary activities, were you aware or active of the civil rights movement growing up?
Speaker 4:	Yes, I was, yes.
Interviewer:	Okay.
Speaker 4:	I was educated in a segregated school. I never had an instructor and slash or teacher of another ethnicity until I got to college. My father was an active participant in the civil rights movement. My teacher's mind, you remember what? All African Americans. And so my is embedded in us. When I got to high school, especially, it was required. They explained to us that we knew the 13th amendment which granted freedom. The inmates which granted citizenship the 15th with granted the ask the right to vote. They taught us with a different flavor and I didn't really realize that until I, until actually my daughter and my nieces and nephews were in school,

they were passionate. They realized what we had to face. Uh, they taught us that not all non people of color are going to treat us fairly, but that was all right because my mother and my teachers, many of them told us because he realized that this was a such a well as they call it cruel and unjust, a world that we were living in, the way they taught us, they were driven, that they will perish preparing us not only for ourselves but also for other people of color and other people who were who were because they were poor whites as they call them.

Speaker 4: They will prepare us for what was to come, but we were living in at that particular time. I never had a new textbook until a new textbook. Mind you, until I got to college, they would. The textbooks that were sent from Jackson High School, which was the all white school, they knew that those textbooks were coming to us and so there were many pages that we're missing out of it and not only were there many pages, but I missed missing out of it. But oftentimes as we were turning the pages or as we were doing what are doing our work, there were messages written like Hello Nigga or, or are look at this book or a Hello Blackie. So, but still our teachers taught us we're going to press forward, God has prepared us and in view of this and in spite of this we're gonna make it. And that's why we have to work so hard.

Interviewer: Wow. I can't imagine. Yes. Wow. Yeah. Can you describe the type of participation that you saw from friends and family and the civil rights movement?

Speaker 4: Oh, my dad again, my dad and Joe Mary who is a Shayla's uncle, Joe Mary. And um, there is another one. Ms Dot Baker, I believe was her name. We had a form of government that was called the commission form of government, which was not redness. There were no blacks, no blacks in city government in Jackson, Tennessee. So my father, who only had an eighth grade, Joel married, who had a 10th grade education and Ms Dot Baker who had a, I think she was, graduated from high school, realize that this was inherently wrong. So they and they petition the city of Jackson so that we could have a different form of government so African American could be represented, represented in government. So they went from the commission form of government to the council form of government. Now

my mother was a little bit, I mean she was a little bit perplexed with my father because they spent their own monies.

Speaker 4: Now remember we were, we were African American children who had a father. My father ran a service station. You can't, an excellent owned a service station. You can't, an Exxon. And he owned Buchanan Grocery. Uh, and he was like a farmer. He had a lot of rental property and he would, he would rent that property out and ask the people if he could plant gardens. Joe Mary ran a small neighborhood grocery store as well, and this beggar was able to get a job at Jackson state community college. I'm telling you about them because they had to mortgage their homes, mortgage, their homes, everything they had in order to, in order to petition and litigate against the form of government that we had. This was, appealed, appealed all the way, all the way to the federal courts and, uh, so I can remember having to do without, but we were taught that this was for the greater good, not only for our household bore for all but many children, many children, African American children of color and others of color.

Speaker 4: And, uh, and by that time a believer or not, there were a number of Asians who were moving into the neighborhood. So we recognize of what they were doing. They taught us in school, they taught us in school and we knew, we knew that this was wrong, but all the while they taught us that education was just, it was paramount. It was important. And the only way to change it was through the court system, through the court system. Uh, we would, my father would tell us to be careful when we went out because remember, they had petitioned the form of government, uh, uh, where we would have equal representation, uh, on the, uh, from the commission for them to the city council. And so oftentimes they recognize us as the Buchanan children or as the marriage children. And we were intimidated, so, uh, but he recognized that God had a greater plan and it wasn't court system. Wow. I'm sorry. Um, I didn't want to cut you off.

Speaker 4: Did, did you all have to take special steps in your day to day to get to school? Were there certain um, to, to stay safe, to stay safe? My father would leave every morning at the, uh, the service station that he owned and operated with on the other side, on the other town out

by laying college actually down the street, but to a lane college. So my father would come home. He would have, if he didn't come home then some of the men that worked for him at the service station would come home to take us to school. Joe Married. Same thing for his children because he recognized and my mother would say, James, just stop. Don't do it. Don't do it. Don't do it. They're going to hurt one of my children. And he said, no, God is with us. This is the right thing to do.

Speaker 4: And I believe, I just believe it's going to be all right. Of course, now they would do things to my father, like, uh, if he didn't pay the utility bills on the date that it was due, they would, uh, make a big issue out of it when it really wasn't. So we had to, he had to always pay things before they will really do, actually do rather because of the soup. We, uh, I can remember walking the picket lines when I was a junior in high school. My brothers as well, and many of my friends in the that were members of the junior in Aa, CTA walk the picket lines as well. We would meet as something called a publishing house. And it was a, it was a house where our Sunday school material was written and published. And that was like our safe haven that I can remember them, uh, not only white children, but white men and women driving by and shadowing others at his own, uh, as we were walking the picket line and throwing eggs at us.

Speaker 4: And oftentimes we were afraid, but those who were with Asos, who were members of the ACP, what I'm talk to us and they were out on the front line as well because we would, it's from, Oh, uh, as soon as the store is open and most of the stores downtown, well actually, uh, owned by Jews. They were owned by the rose, the rose and balloons and the kids burrs. And uh, the, uh, we were just, they were, they knew that I'm being discriminated against was wrong. They knew it and sometimes they was as we were walking by, because it was hot in the summers that we were walking in 1964 and 65 and 66, they will oftentimes they would give us water, oil. And of course, uh, they would tell us not to drink anything that they gave us. So, but all the while, all the while when we got to church, when we got to Church for Bible study and we got to charge for worship service.

Speaker 4: And also when we would even go to practice, it was stilled instilled in us, instilled in us that we were going to be protected because God knew that this was wrong, this was wrong, and he was going to take care of us. He was going to take care of us. Uh, the Lord, we, I can remember saying the Lord will watch over your, your coming and going well now and forevermore. That was one of the verses that we used. Uh, and my, my father would tell us oftentimes he wanted to be violent, not just make money. Yes, they want it to be bothered. They wanted to retaliate because when we would come up the picket line and they had thrown eggs at us and they made a, well, some of them were, I would say sign made innuendos. Some were just downright nasty to us, uh, which say, you know, we have to do something, we're going to get them and uh, nothing is achieved.

Speaker 4: But then we recognize that Martin Luther King and those others who were fighting on a national level for civil rights, they're thing was nonviolence, nonviolence. So we knew that being going through the court system, being nonviolent, doing things the right way, the right way of going was the safe thing to do and again, we always referred back to the fact that the Lord will watch over us coming and going both now and forevermore. So that is one thing that helps sustain us and I think that's why I get a little bit deterred and I get a little bit upset with when I see our young people, when I see them acting the way that they do. Not all of them, just some I don't understand the struggle. You don't understand the struggle. You get to understand the struggle and you get to realize that it is your turn. Now it's your turn to make things better. Not only for us but especially for us as African Americans. There are a number of other people as well, other people as well who are not of color, who are discriminated against because of the fact that there has been so much. So many of us who have intermarried and they've married not intimate, but they've married other races and so they are facing a type a kind of discrimination that we never witnessed before. Oh, yes, yes. That has been Westmont. That's basically what my childhood was like.

Interviewer: Wow. Wow. It sounds like you're. You came from a brave family. Your entire family stood up. I'm, I'm in awe. Thank you that the history maker. Tell me, how do you define resilience? In your own words? How would you define resilience?

Speaker 4: How do I define resilience? I define resilience, resilience as being able, being able to continue on in spite of and in view of your present situation that that present situation is not necessarily bad. It's not necessarily bad. It can be indifferent and I know that most often. Well, the, the resilience, uh, entails a difficulty and with the grace of God, looking back over what grandmomma and grandmother did, my, my mother, my grandmother was Mama. My mother was mother. Dear mom had all different kinds of titles, but I look, I look at them, we looked at them and that it's in every family. I am finding it may not have been as many as I had in my family or some of my friends that, but resilience to me is the ability to work through the good, the bad or the good, the negative and the indifferent and achieve the best, achieve the best.

Interviewer: I love that definition. I love that. I hope you do at that. What have been some determining factors in molding you into the woman you are today?

Speaker 4: I have to say, I have to say again, I touch him. My mother was a little woman, maybe a very little woman with all of us around her and I can remember she never, we never saw her, never saw her down in front of us, but in our house at night, I could hear, I could hear her praying, I could hear her grade. Uh, I could hear and she was very specific as she believed that specificity. And I'm not, I, I as that was part of our prayer life. I'm going to pray for this, this and this today. Even a. But it was my mother, my Mama, my grandmother, my grandmother met my matriarchal grandmother. I was much closer to than I was to my, uh, father's mother, but I looked them in what they can do it. And then I looked at my father and how hard he worked and what he didn't do.

Speaker 4: It, uh, when I would go to church and I went to church, church to us was, it was just a central part of life. We were there early Sunday morning, 9:00 AM for Sunday school. Then we had worship service and then we had something called Btu Baptist Training Union. We had something on Tuesday night called sunshine band all at our choir. Rehearsal was like, uh, oh, was a grand thing. It was really grand. Not only did they teach us mirror, teach us about songs and lyrics and how you should sing and how you should conduct yourself. But many of the mothers in the church with, they would have

refreshments for us. And if we were having problems, there were many who were having problems. They didn't have a mother, they didn't have them. Or they had a mother that was, uh, dealing with alcoholism or they had a father who was abusive.

Speaker 4: And so they were able to come to the church to come to the church because actually we lived right across the street from the church. So what has sustained me is seeing the virtuous mother that I had and I'm just seeing her live her life day by day, day by day. And it was, oh, she was. I, I, sometimes I would just say, oh, I can remember one time my mother, when I get married, uh, my husband is not going to tell me what to do because she would always say that if I asked her to do something, she was say, ask your father. And I said, well, you're my mother. She said, she would say, what did I say? And you're being disrespectful. And that is, it's not my mother was the type that didn't believe in spanking. She would not spank us, but she would pinch you.

Speaker 4: Take my arm. And I said, mother, you said you don't want to Spank, but pension is worse than spanking. She said, no it isn't, but you will never forget it. Now will you know, ma'am, I will not. Now, what did I say? Do ask your father all the time, she will have discussed with him what we need to do and how we were going to do it. So with the 11 of us and especially me being the only girl at home, it was always ask your father. In fact, they didn't believe that I should even learn how to drive. She said, why should you drive? My mother never drove, why should we drive? And I said, because I love to drive. And she said, no, you have brothers to take you where you want to go and you have a father to take you weight where you want to go. She really had me thinking I was blessed. Here I am a senior in high school and I could not drive. I did not drive until I graduated from high school, but my mother, my aunt and I, uh, um, I had friends who have begun to drive. Um, but no, my mother, that was just how she was and what she believes. So it was my mother definitely in batch deal. I mean she still light now, uh, helping me through this life.

Interviewer: Wow. Sounds like an awesome. Love it. Yes. Yes. I know there, there had to have been with such an amazing family. It sounds like you have, um, tools that you all

use for motivation and inspiration and encouragement. I'm like song or even a specific pep talk that your mother or grandmother gave you, or scriptures, family rules or even a club membership dues. Are there any particular tools that you remember utilizing during your upbringing for strength and encouragement? Yes.

Speaker 4: Um, when I say we went to Sunday school, our Sunday school literature too. I came from the Black Baptist publishing house and I can remember, um, uh, I can remember my mother. I this, this is a burst. She, the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want some 23rd psalms. We had to repeat it. And then it wasn't until I was in high school that I really realized what it was, what it meant. And again, I can remember her teaching us. Uh, the Lord will watch over. You're coming and you're going both now and forevermore. And I think that's 12 a 1:21 and eight. Uh, during the, in our songs, oh gosh. Oh Gosh, I can just, Oh, I can hear the songs we used to say, what am I to God, what am I to God? We sent her, what am I, God, we serve angels bow before him having an earth adore him.

Speaker 4: What a mighty God we serve. And I can hear my grandmother's singing. Um, I did not realize it at that time until I was a little bit older, but a amazing grace when they would tune up to play amazing grace and may he didn't grizzlies how sweet. Oh, we would sing it and sing it and sing it. And so when I got a little bit older than I was reading, I think I was probably in the 11th grade and I reading that actually a former slave holder and trailer, he didn't come. He didn't, they didn't turn him as an owner, but that's what he was realized that it was wrong to own slaves and to treat them as cattle. And so he came, uh, he wrote that song, he pinned that some. And I, um, as far as I thought, I don't know, I just decided, well, I'm not, I don't know if I even want that song, I want to sing that song again.

Speaker 4: But the point was, uh, my grandmother told me, Momma said, uh, after I was talking to her, my grandmother lived until she was 100. And so I was talking to her about I was giving her a bath. In fact, Shayla and I would give her a bath because she lived with, she lived with my mother and my mother had gotten a, wasn't, would not be, would not feel well enough to take care of my grandmother, but she would always, she kept her at home and I can remember

Mama would ask me to sing amazing grace and I would say, Mama, I don't know that I want to sing that song anymore. And she said, why baby? I said, you know, it was written, the sun was written by a slave holder. I knew that as a Mama, I, you really, I knew that she said, but look, think of this, know this, that the Lord spoke to him.

Speaker 4: And that's the only thing that changed him. And I said, I never thought of it that way. She said he couldn't hold his peace. So that's why he wrote amazing grace and that's why he changed. So immediately I started singing. He didn't release how and she was saying, feel it has to be the next thing I know. I'm crying. And I'm thinking, oh my goodness. She said. And then Shayla, uh, I think she was in, she was in the eighth grade, eighth or ninth grade. It was in. I can remember in the summer when we would give her her, her bath. She had, my mother had to put a chill chaser in her room. And you know what that is? A chilled chaser is a small gas heater because she would get so cold. And so this is in July now and we're in the south.

Speaker 4: We would have turned the chill chaser on so she wouldn't get cold. Sweat would be pouring off of me. We pouring off a Shayla and she would always say, I love you. I love you little Shayla, I love you. Fe, Santa Fe. This is what she called me. God is gonna. Bless you. She said, I see the sweat pouring off of you. God is gonna. Bless you. God is gonna. Bless you. I have never forgotten, never forgotten it. And so we did that. Not just a, a year or two. We did that for years. All during high school or before she went to fisk and I can remember doing it. Um, uh, oh. Before even before Shayla was, uh, uh, I think probably she was in the seventh, sixth grade and she couldn't really help me that much, but she had gotten to the point where she got older that she could really, really help sometimes she would come home from fisk specifically to help me give mama her bath because my mother wasn't able to do it and she didn't have home health coming.

Speaker 4: We were home health. And so yes, Mama, my grandmother, my Mama and my mother. Yes. I knew that I needed, I needed to do. I had to do it. And when she, when I told her about amazing grace, it seems like it got. And I'm not sure that. I'm sure people know it, they just. But that came to my mind because I'd made

the determination, I'm not going to sing amazing grace anymore, but mama remember he was. He was converted. I said, why? She said he was converted. She said, look at the song he panned, look at the sun. Nobody could do that. But then he realized he was a wealthy man. He had to let us slaves go and it. I was on his mind so passionately that it was a part of him. And so he wrote Amazing Grace

Interviewer: That's for me. I didn't know that, but I didn't think about it that way. Maybe it does change the way you think about it.

Speaker 4: Yeah. I just decided I wasn't going to sing it anymore. I just, I couldn't do that anymore. No, I cannot. And Jeez, they knew the cross. Oh my goodness. You know how to get with a different. I mean, we have, we feel it. So that's a still with me, uh, at our church. Thanked the Lord. There are, we will do hymns and pastor doesn't try to inhibit the flow of the spirit. And we have, I just love our choir and I can tell that they are one voice, that one voice and that spirit that they have when they sing Jesus, keep me near the cross. And with all our, with all the, all the different instruments that they have now they're playing. I love it. I love it. Oh yes, yes, yes.

Interviewer: I, when I hear it, I'm going to think of you and your grandmother and just two more questions. We're wrapping up. Um, can you share your most significant triumphs during that during the civil rights movement time and your greatest disappointment?

Speaker 4: A big shoe or the greatest trial during the civil rights. And I recognize we all know that it isn't over. We know that the civil rights movement isn't over there. Different phases of it during the civil war. Well, during the reconstruction period, I think about it, but, uh, the civil rights amendments, the 13th, 14th amendment I can read, I can remember when our teachers, I think my eighth grade teacher will call the roll and if you. And if she would give you one of those amendments and you had to tell her what it did and you could not say what someone else had previously say it. And so that's ingrained in me and I'm amazed now that a lot of my children don't know what I'm talking about. And so, um, and then walking the when I say, and each, each day or each two or three days, she would add something different if she said she just is worn.

Speaker 4: You have to know what he did in the civil rights movement. If she said little odd nine, you have to know what happened to the little rock. Nine is she's said a plastic versus service. And you got to know what happened. And she would tell you, well, you know what? This could possibly be your test grades. We would say one question and all the wow, we didn't realize she was a master teacher because it was a compilation of all those things that she was saying. But I think, um, I think that one thing that stays in my mind now, number one, was the fact that my father and two others were able to change the form of government in Jackson, Tennessee to make it more reflective and representative of each district that those councilman comes from changing from permission form to the council for them. And I just, I think that's a major achievement that we have a voice.

Speaker 4: And another thing that I think about often, I think about this because there were a lot of people who moved away from here, uh, from the south as they call it. And they went to, they went north somehow or another, some of them were calling it the great migration. And I said, well, and I, I taught Shayla, that's not the great migration. That was not the great migration. That was, you know, I've talked to her about what the great migration was when these people, when a lot of the people were going north and thinking that things were better there and they would come back home and they would see. They would see that, as I said, I would tell a marketer who remember my, uh, some of my, my older brother saying that went to tennis. TSU. They would say they would hire great debates with their friends and they would tell them, oh no, you think that you're getting a superior education when you're going north and you think that you are getting better jobs.

Speaker 4: You're getting the lowest jobs that they can possibly get and there and you're living in the ghettos, if you will, because some of don't disillusion and thinking that we were just poor backward people, poor backward people who were willing to just accept anything that was given to us. First of all, we said whatever we have, it's by the grace of God and a lot of hard work. And then once they decided to look at our children, but children are education that our children were getting, the education that our children were getting. And when I. and then I had another brother who had a class in statistics,

educational statistics. And so he takes up this. He takes it out and he shows them to them. And by the time that time I was in my classroom, and so we had to start taking something called the EOC, which was the end of, uh, end of course exam.

Speaker 4: And I had access to the scores of those students all over the country. And you know, how it was broken down demographically and they would, how much better our students were doing here in the south because they were taught, they were taught. One thing I, I, I, uh, I just, I sometimes I feel sorry, and this is not all of them. When I take, we take our little granddaughter to school everyday. I can tell those teachers who teach, who really cheap, who really takes, not only teach the curriculum, but they teach them lessons for life. And I can tell those who are spirit field and spirit led. I can tell the difference. Uh, I think, uh, when Sheila was in school, I, and I didn't want to do this, but we, um, I had to do it because I could tell that this. I thought she was an atheist.

Speaker 4 So I had to go to the office and request and I did it as quietly as I could and requests is taken out so it makes the difference that kind of is that they have and not only that, the kind of, well, first of all the spirituality of the teacher. I didn't combination the spirituality. You can tell whether or not they love the Lord and I could tell by the work what's the things that she was doing, whether or not they were really in that classroom teaching those standards that were on the curriculum. I got lots of what you asked me, but at any rate, I could tell a difference that I say for us to sit back and do nothing, sit back and do nothing and allow this to happen to any child. Not just an African American child is a grave injustice. And it borders right there on being sick.

Speaker 4: Sinful. You'd get a, you get to make a difference and you gotta make sure your children are in the right place at the right time. Shayla, uh, when she first started selling father, my husband Roderic Mary was a cradle Catholic. You know what that is? I don't. They believe Catholics believe that you are born one Catholic born. They believe that you are born Catholic. So about I think three years a shallow went to Catholic school because my mother in law had seven children and I don't know how she did this because she was married to a man that

what the maries were. I mean good people, brilliant. They think outside the box. I may just to the point when you're around them, sometimes you have. I have to say when I get home, after reteach them things to shut up because they've said all the centers, grandmother, Ms Dot Mary loved her.

Speaker 4: My husband's mother loved Shayla. When I would go to pick her up from school to pick her up from her house because she would get her from school if she wasn't ready to for me to get her, she would not let me in. I'm standing outside, knocking on the door to pick her up so I can get home and get ready for the next day. She would not let me in and when I would call my husband and tell her, I would say writing Ms Dot Mary will not let me in. He said, well, what were they doing? I heard Shannon say, my mom is at the door. She said, I'm busy. I'm teaching you. They will be saying prayers, uh, on the rosary, you know, how they use the rosary to say prayers. She was saying we were, or I was teaching her something, uh, it would be a story, a some type of story.

Speaker 4: She would always have a reading and then she was in the middle of it. She was let me in so I would not let me in. And I was just like, oh my goodness. Every Saturday morning when she was a baby, Ms Dot Mary would be at the door at, oh, about seven, 38 at 8:00 to come over to play with her. But she was a, she was a brilliant, uh, I mean, just brilliant. Uh, he had one sister that lived with her. We called her candy Mary, who was one of the best kindergarten teachers that I had, but she was not balanced because her whole life, her whole life was. Alex was a Andrew Jackson elementary, kindergarten glass. What? Kindergarten class. That's what it was. But I can't say that I love the way they taught her. They taught her to have this love and this zest for reading. And I love that. But it was, it wasn't. It wasn't balanced. It wasn't balanced. You have, I think the spiritual life supersedes the other divisions or the other sections of your life. Uh, they were spiritual, but not to the point. It almost made them dysfunctional. Napa cabbage asked me again. It's all right. It's all right.

Speaker 4: But you were fearing your greatest triumph in your greatest disappointment of my greatest. My greatest triumph. They're going to be my greatest triumph is I believe the number one, a. motherhood was just super important to me. Uh, and I just prayed that I, I taught

Shayla the way my mother and Mama, and I can't leave Ms Dot Mary Out, taught her and not on I, I believe that the children that I taught, because it amazes me sometimes now when I see them out, I would always tell them that I'm from, I'm fair, but more importantly I care and then they're carrying was the spiritual part of me. And they would always say to me, can we have an off day? I said, no, the Lord doesn't take off days so we're not going to take off. They had to be careful about saying that because remember, I had Muslims, I had handies, uh, had a, um, Muslims Hindou's a atheist, which isn't a, it isn't one of the religions, but this child let me know.

Speaker 4:

She was an atheist. I told her mother, uh, I said that I, what did I say to her? I, that I would oftentimes refer to the Lord and she cares nothing about the Lord. So when the mother came to have a conference with me and the principal, she told me that when I walked past her, she said she came with, I mean with both barrels, I mean and double and she was loaded to really let me have it. She said, when I sat down, she said I couldn't do it. So I'm praying that, that you can look beyond Faye, Mary Woods and you can see the spiritual me and know that I care about your child. I care about not just your child. I care about people and I'm going to, I'm going to do. And that caring, that caring comes from this holy word, and that I'm going to always, always when I do wrong, I said, Lord, forgive me.

Speaker 4:

Forgive me, and teach me the errors of my ways so that I will not commit this again. If I do it again, I'll ask it again. But, uh, I'm praying that you can see beyond this facade of Fei, Mary Woods and see the spirit in me and that spirit in me to direct my life. And it's a adaptive my life until I pray that it is a spirit of excellence, a spirit of excellence in the Lord, and you can just see it and it's undeniable that it's there. And that is me. So I think this accomplishment is they can see the spiritual man see this, me, and in all the areas in my life, even when I'm having fun, I think I was fair with that. I went to this. I think it wasn't, uh, uh, it was some type of like, uh, a benefit. But at the benefit they had dancing. And so a Sensei, mom. No, I think it may have been dead, mom. I think you're doing the home today and said, oh, that's right. They don't know what I'm. And that's all right. I said, look, the rest of it too. I said, that's okay. That's okay. I think the greatest accomplishment is that Ana

and I recognize father God is a very. I mean, he's central in my life,

Interviewer: right?

Speaker 4: It dictates everything I do from being a mother, a daughter, a teacher. Uh, even when I'm writing the curriculum, I, I pray that they can just feel it and feel it because I've been around people like that and I thank him and I, I just thank the Lord for that.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Okay. This is our final question. Okay. I currently reside in south Florida in the year I moved here. There was this, I'm sorry.

Speaker 4: Use it as an excuse me. What did you say you reside in South Florida?

Interviewer: I currently reside in south Florida. I do, yes ma'am. I lived in Texas, Texas. Oh, oh no, I didn't.

Speaker 4: I got it right. I got it right now. And they were showing me pictures of your been and was bragging about your husband built your home, right? Your House?

Interviewer: Uh Huh.

Speaker 4: Okay. What is your home now? And he was bragging up Jamail Jamal, what is his name? Joelle. Joelle. And was bragging about him and so now I don't know how I moved you from Florida too, but I got it now I got it.

Interviewer: Okay. But the year that I moved here was the same year that Trayvon Martin was killed

Interviewer: and I have seen progressively things getting more, more um, uh, African American men and women being killed, um, with no more explanation other than, Oh, I was afraid. I thought they had a gun. I thought they were gonna do something. Um, so many people are saying this is a new civil rights movement or this is a, a new wave. If you had the ear of this new generation, these young people who call themselves the next generation of civil rights activists and leaders, what would you say? What will be the advice, the encouragement, the inspiration that you would give?

Speaker 4: Okay. Um, and let me be perfectly clear, Dana, get progressively worse. Number one is starting with the fact. Well, there is like a parallel here. I have to do a t chart on this. So I, I'm okay. The president has set the tone and even before that, but the president has set the tone for this kind of thing to continue to happen. He has set the tone, he encourages violence,

Speaker 4: he speaks violence. And I think before it's all over, we'll learned, we will learn that he is a violent man. And so I'm African American men who have heard things and, and, and it's starting in the home for them. I believe it's starting in the home for them. They had mothers who were not mothering far too young to. They had fathers who were, if they were in the home, they were ungodly, uh, they didn't do the things that they should have done and this is not an escape for them. So they were looking, they were looking for an identity and they were looking for acceptance and post some of those people that they look too in charge them to do anything that they wanted to buy anything anyway, that was necessary anyway, that they, they justified anything that they do because we have to be perfectly honest about it.

Speaker 4: Um, some of them are committing crimes and uh, some of them not only are they committing crimes, but committing crimes against their very own, our very own people of color, the kind of people that they hire as policemen now they have a mindset that violence begets violence, violence begets more violence. And so rather than trying to work something out peacefully, those I've heard policeman say, well, we weren't just there. They called us and that's not always the case, but there's something wrong with the mindset. And that again, begins in their home and that begins as it has been something that has happened in their lives that has caused them to be violent. And so when they see an African American young man that they can justify shooting, justify a stabbing, justify kicking them, they feel that that's alright. That's alright. Because clearly this young man was in the wrong.

Speaker 4: It has become accessible. I remembered the mindset is already there, it's all right with our president and we really don't know, uh, what their, uh, what's being told to them at the police department. So this is a dangerous, a dangerous time. And so intolerant,

intolerant, and I don't believe that all the time, they are afraid. I don't believe that all the time police officers are afraid that they're going to be hurt or that something is going to happen. They're just, you know, it's just violence. It's just violent and this has become more acceptable. It has become more acceptable. And until you get councils they're on until you get people in law there who knows the difference you have been trained and who know the difference between a young African American young man who is just as violent as you are or who will, uh, who may not be just as viable until they are trained and trained.

Speaker 4: Well. Again, we don't know what they're being told when they have their 7:00 AM meetings and some of them say they are afraid, some of them are not. They're not afraid. It's just, um, it's a, it's like a, it's like a spirit has taken over. And some of them they ride around looking, looking. Either you get, either you get them or they'll get you. And that's not the case. That's not the case all the time. So it's a tone that has been set in this ungodly will and think about it each day is validated somehow some way and it's growing. It is growing. And most of them, I think if we were to look at the environment in which they've grown up in, I'm talking about these young black men when they see another young black man being shot, being stabbed, being tased, shot and stabbed.

Speaker 4: And in particular, all it does is compound compound that evil. I mean that feeding evil evilness that's growing on the inside of them because of what they see. And remember, it starts, it starts in the womb, it starts in the womb. They, they have seen so much and the only and the families that they had gone to, other people that they have gone to, to help them are oftentimes they used them and they're violent. And then thus the same thing that's happening with the police officers, the want, they send, the ones that they know we'll shoot, that will stand for no particular reason when talking to them, uh, could just as well stop the problem. Uh, they have seen and what they're seeing in the movies, what they're seeing on and everything is just violence is violent, this is becoming a violent world. And then when it is accepted, when it's accepted in our court systems, what else is going to happen?

Speaker 4: Police officers are always going to a number of them. Not all of them are bad, but they're gonna say, well, you know, I thought he was going to approach me. I thought he was going to do something to me, but in both cases on the one side of the t chart, when it's the young men and the police are called, then you have to volunteer forces that I'm needing to us is that our meeting. And they have to know that there is a different way. Uh, it cannot. And I'm seeing that even when they see violence and when they see the potential of what can happen to them, it isn't stopping them. Um, there the man that just shot the, the young man that was going to, he said he was parked in the first and parked in the wrong place. There was something wrong.

Speaker 4: There was a vial vibe of violent concept and that man's mind, he shifted, walked up to that car. You're not the police, you didn't have any business, you don't have any business. And a black man sin, a white men approaching his, his wife or his girl, if it can, his natural tendency, my natural tendency, if somebody was going to hurt one of my children are hurt, our child would be to retaliate. So we're just, it's this vicious cycle of violence, a vicious cycle of islands. And then we're dealing with people who are number one, who don't know the Lord. They are unchurched and they live in this very volatile world. So it's going to take it's gonna. Take a piece was going to have to a peaceful solution, a peaceful because you know, we're going to self destruct, looked at the numbers of black men up there.

Speaker 4: And as we are speaking, there are some black men, there are some other men of color who, if they were not men of color, if they were not African American, uh, they will be treated differently. But then on the other hand, police officers, some of them say that they are afraid, but that tendency is there that violent and then see is there. So it's going to take a lot of education and that education is going to have to start. And uh, and, and uh, even the judges, they validate what they do when they shoot black men especially they, uh, they go to court and they say if they say it was self defense, Oh my God, clearly it is that just sitting there, something is not right. So we becoming too accepting of violence, too, accepting of violence. And when you have a president that stands, that gets on TV and this is her, it resonates. It says that I could stand in the middle of, I think it was main street in whatever city he was in and

shoot at. Nobody would do a thing. What is it teaching our young men? They already hear it. You, they already here it says make.

Speaker 4: It has become internalized. And so there it is. Violence begets violence. So there's going to have to be a rehab, a whole movement, a whole movement. And I say it began with people who are spiritual people. It's gonna have to start there. We're going to have to start teaching our mothers and our fathers and on the other hand, police officers and and that this is by design. They hire. Oftentimes they hire police officers who are violent, who are prone to violence, whether it is a man or a woman who a problem from the. When you are in the company of someone who is violent or when you are in the company of someone who is strange, you can tell it. That should be a disqualifying factor. That should be a disqualifying. This qualifying factor for hiring someone. You can tell it, you can so you have.

Speaker 4: They're going to have to be taught, taught and they have better training, much better training, much better training and that training needs to be developed like a school curriculum and the very beginning to the end results of what you want from the. From the kind of people that you hire. What should transpire and it cannot be like, oh, this is. I got to do something tonight. I, if I, if I shoot somebody tonight, uh, my, a superior officer will think that I, I stopped some crime and some kind of way. So they're looking at statistics. They are not looking at these, these young men who have realized and they were, when they were hired, they knew that they weren't going to be called or they weren't going to encounter people who have these nice little lies that's not the case. So you teach them how you deal with violence, have to specifically deal with African American young men.

Speaker 4: And these African American young men, remember, many of them know they, it goes all the way back from them being taken from being sold at the slave auction. So how many of them, they, they don't know anything but being absentee absentee fathers, they don't know anything but violence. So they know that our history, that part. And they decided and many of them decided I'm just not going to take it. And when you hire them, you're not going to pay them a fair wage. No. Uh, so they decided I'm going to take it. Or in some cases it is,

a lot of cases, it is just pure, purely wrong, someone walking through a neighborhood and because you think they shouldn't be there and uh, they may have a hood on and then some violent, some people looking out the window and calling the police on him.

Speaker 4: And in reality I found it in a, I think this was in Milwaukee, that child lived there two doors down, two doors, two doors down. Was shot and killed. Oh Wow. Yes. So it's going to have a whole different mindset. And my contention is that that mindset is going to have to come from people what your people and it's going to have to be a whole new training. And it starts at this point, it has progressed to the, uh, at this juncture rather it has progressed to the point where if I'm president, if our president can validate violence and breaking the law and abused, uh, people and mistreating women and speaking ell them. What else, what do you think? What do you think? And mothers, mothers who have mothers who have been in a spiritual environment and they have Eliza just because I, the lady, the young girl that does my hair has five children and when I talked to Kerry one day she just broke down. She said, Ms Dot ms.ms.ms.ms dot woods. If I had known what to do, I never would have had five children. She said, I've been taking. Her mother had a stroke when she was 14 and she said, I've been taking a mother every since I was 14 because she had started doing my. So I would say, Kerry, why are you doing this? And she said, I'm just trying to do the best I can. And then she told me about the history of it,

Interviewer: I said, oh my God.

Speaker 4: And I said, so it starts in the home. It starts in the home and that. And before that home you've got to have that spirit filled life and then it has to become more systemic where you're taught what to do.

Interviewer: So that's cool. Yes. Thank you so much for your time. I enjoyed this. I enjoyed getting to know you. We'll certainly keep you abreast of my progress in the program. They should. All my interviews are done and transcribed. If you'd like a copy and you can just send me an email and I will certainly make sure you get a copy. And the goal is to graduate. May Two thousand 19. So please be in prayer with me.

Speaker 4: I will. I'm doing that. It's already done. We'd been doing that. And when I looked at your, uh, your, the title of your dissertation, I said how long it took you a long time to write it because I noticed that it is balanced, uh, that. Oh my goodness. I know. It took her a while on the upbringing, a family theological, educational, formal and informal interactions and impressions left behind upon you during the years of 1950 through 1970. Where is it?

Interviewer: Hi. Yes. Is this the title? This African American women who came of age during the civil rights movement? Yeah. Ordinary African American women. I think our eyes, what? I use the word, the term I had,

Speaker 4: I think Shayla sent it to me and it took you a long time to come up with a balanced title and to

Interviewer: titles and you had to figure out how am I, how are you going to test it? Oh my goodness. And A. is this a rewrite? How, how long did it take you to, uh, to develop? Uh, um, I'd say about two years of work and rework it. And then they took, it took about two years. For Awhile I had, I knew what I wanted to write on, but I didn't still couldn't give, put a title to it. So it took about two years

Speaker 4: and you submitted and then they would, when you get it back and they will have gone through and you think, oh my goodness,

Interviewer: uh, I can remember the testable. Oh, I'm hoping from all the interviews, the, the practical theological tools, the wisdom that you all share. I'm hoping to eventually use it to turn it into programming to help millennials. And I'm first generation college students and community organizations so that we can build and better speak to our young people.

Speaker 4: Wonderful. Oh my goodness. This is deeper than you. You're your phd. This is medicine. It really is.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am. Maybe it is. I believe this is what I'm called to.

Speaker 4: It is really mad ministry. So I was just. I think I have. I'm trying to. I did. I don't know how you may have sent it

to me, but at any rate, I'm sure you did. I'm a. When I read the title, I said, Shayla, do you not know how long it took her to develop this and how many

Interviewer: it was red lied, send it back and then it adds basis testable. Well, how are you going to test it? So is this the only. How are you as well? You have a survey or you going to do your, um, after the interviews I'm doing a sample study of women and it looks like I'm going to have to do. I was originally shooting for small sample size, but I realize now that I'm going to have to do a larger sample size, so I'm going to have to do more like 20 to 30, possibly women from there. Um, after transcribing, um, I'll take out key terms, common key terms will be extracted. So then I can then say that these are practical theological to have used in result for resiliency and from those key terms and those tools. I'll take those tools and I'll use those for programming and retention in churches and universities. And then you, I'm sure you having to define your terms and oh my God, yes. There's a whole nother level. The interviews are the fun part for me because I enjoy just sitting under the tree of wisdom and listening, but the transcribing, the defining and then the terms it even after I define it, my committee still has to agree to it and if they don't agree to the definition or even that this term means the same as that term, I would have to adjust it. So still a lot of work,

Speaker 4: but don't be discouraged and take it as what it is is the learning experience and that learning and experience isn't an is an enhancement to your ministry and then you will reach, you will know how to. It will be an answer for ell or solution

Speaker 4: women. It will be and not only will you be feeding into African American women, but there'll be others who will run across this study who were not African American and they will. It will be a benefit. It will. That's managing

Interviewer: ray, I believe for food overtly, but thank you for your participation. I greatly appreciate it.

Speaker 4: You are so welcome and I'm just sorry that we. I'm trying to figure out. I can't even remember what we were doing Friday at this point and then said he had not gotten.

Interviewer: Maybe you were busy. You had if you had a doctor's appointment and everything. So it's not a problem at all,

Speaker 4: but I liked when I make a commitment I want to go ahead and do and get it done. And so by 3:15 when you had not called I've cost Shayla and I didn't. I guess I missed. Did you email me or text me and tell me that I needed.

Interviewer: Have his number? Yes ma'am. I did.

Speaker 4: I think I just wanted to be in place, not in check emails and or text. I just wanted to be in place and so I'm just waiting and then I get up and I started doing something. I said I'm waiting and I checked the phone and I thought what's going on?

Interviewer: Okay. I understand. I have a lot of women in Memphis that I interviewed and they are on central time, but I also had women in Philadelphia and California that I interviewed and for some reason I put them all down as central standard time. So for a few women I was an hour late for all of them and I had to apologize profusely for, for making them wait and had to reschedule. So I am. I very understand because I felt so bad. I said I'm so sorry. Please forgive me. But I have everybody down in central Austin interest in little debacle. But we, I got it together.

Speaker 4: You and do I see now mom open this and see where she. I said, oh, I said I didn't say that. I thought she was going to ring me up and we were going to just talk.

Interviewer: Yeah. I wanted to record so I can listen and not trying to type while you talk. I to actually take in the information so the, the conference call record it for me so I don't have to do anything. Okay. Okay.

Speaker 4: It, it has blessed me. Oh well.

Interviewer: So you have certainly blessed to me. I appreciate it.

Speaker 4: You just forever welcome. I just got you. Yes, yes, yes, yes. Please follow up and let me know what's going on and how you're progressing along and that would just

	be absolutely real. I will be wonderful. It will be fruitful to me.
Interviewer:	Absolutely. I will. And you enjoy the rest of your day. I won't take up anymore of your time.
Speaker 4:	Okay. It's just been wonderful.
Interviewer:	Yes, it has. It has been wonderful. Uh Huh.
Speaker 4:	Oh okay.
Interviewer:	Okay. Thanks again. Take care. I will, but it's okay. The next time we talk, I pray it's in person.
Speaker 4:	Yes, yes, yes. Take care of yourself and this is going to be all right. It's going to be wonderful and it will end up just not well. Are they gone to publishing bounded and publisher? You're going to get it bound in public.
Interviewer:	Okay? Yes ma'am.
Speaker 4:	So this will be a blessing to you. Just don't know. It will be a blessing, truly.
Interviewer:	Okay? Okay.
Speaker 4:	Hate to let you go. As you can tell a, a, a private, you can get the other, the next part of the other. Complete your interviews and go onto the next section of your.
Interviewer:	One of your dissertation and the full. Okay. Bye Bye. Bye Bye.

Interview 5

Interviewer:	Thank you. Okay. My first question, my first four questions are just basic demographic questions. Can you share with me your birthday?
Speaker 5:	My birthday, the actual day and year to year to date in January third, 1952.
Interviewer:	And as of today, how old are you?
Speaker 5:	65 and I don't look it.
Interviewer:	I'm sure. I'm sure you are. Where were you born and raised?
Speaker 5:	Lexington, Kentucky is where we were born, but we were raised in the Bronx, New York. I'm a New Yorker, transplanted to Maryland. Right outside of DC.
Interviewer:	Now this is funny. You're already giving me off schedule because you're a twin and I have twin daughters and you're from Lexington, Kentucky and I'm from Louisville, Kentucky. Oh my goodness. Okay. We'll talk to my mother. It was Robert Lee was her house. Yeah, we'll talk. Okay. Okay. Okay. So could you describe to me your childhood and the community you grew up in?
Speaker 5:	So growing up in the Bronx, New York is how New York has referred to it. A real Bronx site would say the Bronx was a childhood in the projects far as projects, which in those days it was a brand new complex and you know, in New York that high rise projects. So what we think about projects today and what the projects were back then is totally different. It was a fabulous childhood because my father, a security being one of the first families in this brand new, lovely, uh, was not going to say, uh, what is the word community that was safe. And um, we had a two bedroom apartment on the sixth floor and lifelong friends to this day. It were made by my mother and my sister and I. So we had a wonderful community based on those times as much, uh, these stereotypes of the Bronx as Fort Apache.
Speaker 5:	A place of a great inner city danger doing those days was not the case. It was a beautiful place. And then,

then I, um, had a wonderful community that it should be as little girls. Growing up in your day to day ordinary activities, were you aware? How were you aware or active in the civil rights movement? Okay, so it started in second grade and we were bused as little girls out of our community and neighborhood to an all white, predominantly white, all white school for third grade. And so that was very impactful because the Indian I getting off of that school bus, I remember vividly seeing white people with signs. I don't remember reading it, but I remember mother telling us they were picketing outside of the school we were to walk in and saying they didn't want a black people in their neighborhood. So I remember the people with the signs, but I guess being, you know, um, eight going into nine years old, we were terrified.

Speaker 5: They were scared of us, but we were terrified because we couldn't understand what was the commotion. We're just two little girls. Why would they scare? And we were terrified because we didn't see anybody who looked like a man. Will you two. The only two that integrated the school, I know neighborhood from the neighborhood and so I would speak for those other children. Some were crying because they were scared. That's my introduction as um, a child who experienced civil rights. It was about segregating schools, right, so that's how I first met and moving forward things did settle down and we stayed in that elementary school until seventh grade and then went to what we call in New York junior high school, which was predominantly white in the same neighborhood and then onto high school in a predominantly white neighborhood. Still honestly bus being bused out of our neighborhood. Pretty profound. When I think back on it now,

Interviewer: what kind of participation did you see from your friends and family?

Speaker 5: Um, our parents, those who could afford cars would drive behind the school bus to make sure of that we will. Okay. And that we got into the school. Okay. And if one parent couldn't drive or didn't have a car, the bad parent drove the other parents because they were worried about it. And so, uh, the parents effected banded together. Not for anything negative, but for the fear and concern of their baby's leaving on a school bus. We'd never been on a school bus. We walked to school.

So I would say the community rallied around each other for those who were bused away. I remember parents taking turns whereby the car, because everybody in those days didn't have a car, couldn't afford it. We live in, in the projects, public housing, and we took the city and the subway, that school buses.

Interviewer: And in your own words, can you define resilience? Resilience?

Speaker 5: Uh, let me give you my first experience where I was and then his, well, a felt to be inadequate because of the color of our skin. And in those days they didn't call it ap classes. You were in m three. One, three, two, three, one being the highest class intellectually, three, two, so elementary, junior high, and even high school. Um, we excelled and were put both of us, even though they hated it in the one class, which would suggest even in high school when people are looking at colleges, that we were the end of the equivalent of an ap or honors. And when we rent for guidance and counseling for college, they told us to go to a vocational school. So

Speaker 5: today you have two girls and an AP. There would be no one who would suggest they shouldn't be qualified or ready to go to college are resilient came in because we didn't allow that to discourage us. We kept pushing. We applied for all of our colleges alone because they wouldn't help us and I never forget mother sitting with us filling it out. My Dad would come home, a brilliant man, but he only finished some college. My mother would do the edit to our paper and, and then approve that they were ready to be sent out. We had to be very resilient during those times and still today. I'll tell you about that later

Speaker 5: or I can now because. Okay. Fast forward to um, the reason I ended up here in the DC area, I came in 1978 to go to Grad school and then 30 years later I decided to get a doctorate. So I'm turning it in. In those days you didn't submit it in progress. You had to have five bound copies and 80 in the graduate office, a white female that Dr Williams. I'm so sorry. I said what's wrong? He said you have gw twice on your cover page. You got to change it. Take it to quick copy right away. I said News Flat, Dr William here twice. It's not a mistake. So to me it was, there's no way this black girl was here twice. It can't be possible. And so I'm just through that I changed

from with another girl in the fifties and sixties where I am getting ready to walk out this door with a document, but it had been a mistake because it one possible I can be there twice. First Time. Good luck. That was in 2008. Really? Yes. That's just how it is.

Interviewer: Oh, tell me some of the things, the determining factors that have molded you into the woman you are today.

Speaker 5: Uh, my parents on that day always. But from that day in high school when we didn't get to experience what the other kids were to apply for college, they kept us grounded. They kept us motivated because we were hurt that we didn't get to do what we heard all the white kids doing with their guidance counselor applying for colleges. So that had a huge impact on us. And so they were the ones that said your way out of law is through your educate. They do. Our power empowerment is

Interviewer: young women. Wow. What do you consider sources of strength during those difficult times growing up? Um, segregating, being the first desegregated school. Not fully understanding what was going on.

Speaker 5: Yeah, how did we manage it? Um, well again, parents and empowerment and belief in ourselves that we were smart and that our path only add one direction and that was college. We dreamed and talked about it at our dinner table, like other kids, like white kids. We talked about it and so there just wasn't any reason why we didn't think we should be going. I wouldn't say there was more support from our parents, what faith filled and took us to church, um, and our church family encouraged that, knew that it was hard but dad to pay the application fees. So they were helpful financially so that my dad didn't stretch himself out. He was already working three jobs and a lot of was to make sure we had money for those applications. So I would say, you know, I was our parents who grounded us and supported us, church family and Linden.

Speaker 5: I, um, so it's a twin thing. I know I'm going off script, but when you talk about how we managed ourselves always quietly late at night doing a twin thing where nobody was allowed into that emotionality. We prayed a lot together on getting fool and we get the pickup Mij when we were never called derogatory names that I can

remember, but when things felt disparaging, we always lifted each other because we were always best friends and even today, so if there was something about our twin minutes that kept us motivated and kept us encouraged and positive about the kinds of lives that we want it for ourselves.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. Were there specific tools that were used as a source of motivation or inspiration? Like a song that you remember singing or specific pep talk that an elder Gaye view scriptures or even word of advice?

Speaker 5: Yes. My Dad was a bible scholar and um, he always quoted scripture and he always had a thing, a him with him and, and my mother would walk back then she was like, oh boy it had been, she was in another place with us at that time. Um, I would say he was the source of our strength and our fullness and staying faithful and focus, um, to, you know, in those days, tools or your people, you know, you have family and your close friends. There was no tools like we have today other than a pop up given us Bible verses, but each one of us who might be going through something and saying that. Did you read that Bible verse? Let's go over it again. That was the tool.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you name your most significant, what you would consider the most significant triumphs as well as be greatest disappointments during the civil rights movement?

Speaker 5: I'm going to say I'm completing,

Speaker 5: uh, Nyu for me in undergraduate and Hofstra University, Belinda undergraduate, we were in the throes of affirmative action. Okay. And so we benefited from, um, all of the programs and scholarship programs they had for minority who were again brought into predominantly white institution like Hofstra, Nyu. We were one of few, I think in my entire program, which is speech pathology and audiology at Nyu. There was only two African Americans, he and another young lady, what does that do to, that makes us work harder than everybody else because we couldn't fail. They let us in and they were watching and they were watching fee if we had what it took to complete. So the attitude in the sixties moving into the seventies, the Vietnam War and all of that. But the civil rights created the 1964 civil

rights act and all of these white schools letting minority students in because of affirmative action. I clearly benefited from that.

Speaker 5: And what would you say was your greatest disappointment? The greatest disappointment in the undergraduate or in general? In general. Maybe during the civil rights. I'm going to tell you what that looks like. So because born in Kentucky, in all of our family was in Kentucky when we drove south. I didn't know until I was a grown woman that my dad always made picnics and I'm like, Geez, Linda, are you kidding me? We never go in those restaurants and sit down. Daddy is always making picnics. Guess what? We couldn't go in. You had to get your meal and I'm out. I didn't know that till I was a grown woman. It hurt me dearly. Back. These two little girls excited on their way to see their grandparents and Kentucky could not eat. We thought it was just my dad, but he didn't want us to know that. That's why we did the picnics.

Speaker 5: He'd come out with the food. Now it hit me again as a grown woman when we didn't drive. My Dad worked in those early years. When he met my mother on the grand central railroad. He was one of the first black pullman porters. As such, we got free rides. I've made train to go to Kentucky. Well, here we go again. Every time we got to DC, we always got off. Did think about it. Mom wasn't telling us that we went to trains in the back down. Why does that happen? When you get to Baltimore, you're at the Mason Dixon line. So when we got to DC we had to get off that train and I remember mom dragging all the suitcases because we were like eight, nine, 10, 11. See what I'm saying? We went to. I didn't know that either and that was in the sixties. And so I was like. And my dad always had a buddy with somebody on that route and they were taking care of us so we didn't know. We didn't know. But once we found it was, are you kidding me? This was, that's what happened. Oh my goodness.

Speaker 5: But they protected. So we wouldn't expect because when you come from New York, everybody's diverse. Even in South Bronx, Puerto Rican, black, west, Indian from Jamaica, a Dominican. So we didn't know anything different. You know, in New York everything is diverse. That's where immigrants came into this country. So I experienced was always embracing people who don't

look like a. But as soon as you get south of Baltimore in terms of those days and what Linda and I remember it, it changed [inaudible]. We didn't know they did their best to protect them.

Interviewer: um, well I am a currently a resident of south Florida and the first year that I moved here, a couple months right after I moved here is when Trayvon Martin was killed in Sanford, Florida, which is maybe two hours north of me. So a classmate and I are the two, only the only two African American women. Um, we just got in a car with the money in our pockets. You drove up like we got to do something March protest something, but we felt like we just had to do something. Um, and since then there have been countless slain black men and women and some would even say that there is a new civil rights movement, um, in place and, or coming up with your wisdom, with your knowledge, with the experience that you have had it and you having the ear of this generation, what would you say, what will be the, the, the, um, the advice, the practical application, the practices, information, what would you say to this? This generation.

Speaker 5: Okay. So we talk on millennials and generation x millennials pretty much.

Interviewer: Yes, primarily millennials. Yeah,

Speaker 5: because if you go younger than that, honestly, there is a disconnect from our history in that regard. It starts with the Trayvon Martin. I used it in my diversity course as a case study and it brought more interest than when I would show the Martin Luther King era. People getting hosed down with, you know, water, uh, not so much. However, when I brought in Dr Henry Louis Gates getting arrested, going into his own house as a case study and the Martin as a case study, they could relate. And so I say how, how far back? Because today when we talk about civil rights, this generation is starting with the trayvon Martin, with the gentleman a ferguson with, you know, the black lives matter. There's a connection. And so with the women's movement, because don't forget women were part of the civil rights because women couldn't vote. They couldn't vote and were disparaged in terms of political theme. Case in point, my grandmother, um, maternal, uh, the 101 she knew when women couldn't vote and blacks. And so I

would say today is understand what your own struggle is as a minority and understand it through the lens that you're at now. I honor those 60, but I've learned now from what's happening happening in 2018, in 2010, you honor it and you understand the struggle where you are. Everything is historical and I'm not upset if you don't totally get it because you're having your own journey now.

Speaker 5: Yup. Black African Americans are having their journey now and so it looks different and that's okay. But it's the same struggle. We just dressed it up.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 5: Oh, be participatory in the movement. But the movement started to look different because I'm going to tell you this, I mean young people down, believe it or not, don't know trayvon mind based on people now. Young people don't remember Katrina. So your reference point for what's impactful changes. You have to be a steward of it where you are.

Interviewer: Yeah,

Speaker 5: absolutely. Okay. Well thank you. That was my final question. Are there any last minute comments you wanted to add in to the interview before I stop the recording? Well, when I think back as I'm young girls and young women, and I say it plural because until we went to college, Lyndon, I experience everything together because we'd never without each other. It took so much to understand when you're good girl's doing what the parents tell you. Being faithful girl, it took a lot for us to understand why we couldn't get that help to go to college is where you start getting excited and we around all those white kids, everybody talking over lunch. They didn't know that we couldn't go to the guidance counselor, so they thought we would just as pumped up. We had to pump our emotions up to know that we were doing what they were doing.

Speaker 5: All bias though that that's powerful because had it not been for our parents' perspective on who we should be and who we could be. I. I don't know what maybe we would have been in a vocational school. That. Here's the funny thing, I have just finished my 20 year career in the community college and quite frankly I proposed it as as

hard as anything because of finance, which most parents always struggling to send kids to school. I would promote a two year and then transferred to save, save some money for the parents, so I didn't feel good in 1973, but I tell you now it is something that I believe in wholeheartedly, but that wasn't the journey we were supposed to have. Then

Speaker 5: more people. Yeah, it was a dirty word. Go to a trade school, you say, and we end the one class, the honors class. I'm on student government in high school. Then denied. I got straight a's, sat back then we had really high scores and here's, here's what's so crazy. Linda was the one applying to every school in the country. I applied to to New York University and city college because I heard the kids say, the white kids, you got to pick a safe school. So I looked at that. You go right here. I know where I'm going. She said, bread, you got to apply for a lot and that's it to schools. So daddy was getting that money to help Linda, but she wanted to go to oral roberts and way out west and she wanted to go down south and she wanted to go to Chicago and I'm like, I'm not going anywhere.

Speaker 5: I'm going to schools, one of the other and, and I, I got there and so it was the tail and have the most active part of civil rights. Sixty four to 70, then 70 to about 72, 73. Seventy four was huge for minority students to go to college because of affirmative action. So we benefited greatly from the civil rights movement, which a move people in institution to bring minority kids. And so some of our scholarships were need based, but the biggest ones were academic based on academic scholarship. That, that's also something that um, I thought was a great accomplishment. Yeah. We didn't have a lot of money. So yes, we did get a need-based fellowships, but the biggest ones was because of our scholarship and you know it in school, in grade. It's. Yeah. That's all I wanted to add to that.

Interviewer Thank you so much for sharing. Thank you. I really appreciate it. And I'm going to stop the recording just one minute.

CHAPTER FIVE. CONCLUSION

This study began with a cry for the ordinary African American woman to tell her own story and not simply an interpretation of her story. A request for the community, the academy and the church to not only make room for her unique experiences but to intentionally listen. A brief overview of the history of African Americans in the united states of America was presented. This overview included the birthing of the African American church and its inception blossoming out of necessity. The outlawing of slavery along with the implementation of Jim Crow laws was also addressed. It was from the implementation of the separate but equal understanding of Jim Crow laws that a need for civil rights surfaced and what we know today as the Civil Rights Movement was birthed. There were also mentions of other studies that examined resiliency and its causes and effects. There had been other studies on the Civil Rights Movement historically and socially on the leaders and participants but there had not been a research study that focused on the practical theological practices of ordinary African American women during that time.

What makes this study unique from other studies is that the interviews conducted display participants that found their social justice and theological convictions to be one and the same despite never being recognized formally in any leadership capacity. There wisdom and resilience along with the practical theological tools and resources utilized to produce a favorable outcome was the focus of this study. In honoring the sacred text in Psalms 71:9 that “Do not cast me off in the time of old age, do not forsake me when my strength is spent.” It was the intention of this study to honor the elders for their longevity, their sacrifice, resiliency and wisdom gained that has earned them a place within the

community as the local expert. Recognition of the faith filled history of African American people is not only empowering it is transformative. The sharing of, African American women who came of age during the civil rights movements, stories is a step in the right direction to empower and transform the community. The women that were interviewed within this study were a small sample size of women present during the Civil Rights Movement and actively participated or had family members that participated in various demonstrations throughout the southeast and Midwest region. While most may say these events were primarily historical and social in nature it would be inadequate representation of the movement and the people. For the participants of this study the Civil Rights Movement was an extension of their theological understanding. Lived learned faith-based practices were demonstrated that had many African Americans identifying with the narratives of oppression found within the Christian text. The stories provided hope for those who identified with the Israelites that were enslaved but ultimately set free by a messenger from God. The rescuing of the Hebrew boys from fire, the lifegiving spirit that came upon the valley of dried bones, and ultimately the hope of new life, that Jesus Christ ultimately displayed in his resurrection from the grave.[190] These are only a few Christian narratives that gave hope to oppressed people. Along with other scriptures and texts that were made into songs, chants or quoted directly. The faith of the people of the Civil Rights Movement was an interictal part of their participation and resiliency during a dark time in history for African Americans and anyone that stood along with them for equality. Having survived the good and bad of life the elders hold a unique perspective on life that can only be attributed to their longevity, it is for that reason

[190] Cain Hope Felder, Stony the Road we Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, Fortress, 1991), 29.

respect and intentional listening must be encouraged of all members of the community. To sit and glean from their fountain of wisdom is gift to both the speaker and listener that can credited with enhancing the faith practices of the community at large.

Practical Theological Tools & Resources of Resilience

This study recognizes a small portion of the wisdom, elders within the African American community possess, that can be lost if not properly recognized. Life teaches us a great many lessons but one of the greatest is to learn how to rise each time each time you fall, resilience must be your best friend. From the interviews the participants were able to recall times that their faith was a key factor in coping with difficulties and how it was reconciled within their home base, community or selves to produce positive results. Family and community were stated as the greatest influence through such tools as song, scripture and words of affirmation. The support of family and community was regarded as a source of strength. With such statements as "What has sustained me is seeing the virtue of my mother[191]" and "my mother, her sisters all of them were very very strong[192]" shows that the support and strength was not just in word but in actions as well. While most songs and scriptures were recalled specifically, such as "23rd Psalms[193]", "I can still hear my grandmother singing what a might God we serve.[194]" It was words of affirmation that had a more complex meaning and impact. With one interviewee recalling encouragement from a neighbor "The words that she gave me I can't really remember what they were, but just this encouragement, inspiration and just that just gave me a lot of

[191] Interviewee #4, Pg 108
[192] Interviewee #1, Pg 80.
[193] Interviewee #4, Pg 109
[194] Interviewee #4, Pg 109

hope[195]" Words of affirmation was also described as time and attention in a positive manner that encouraged or described an end result that may not have been possible during the time of legalized segregation. In other words, the words of affirmation that left the greatest impact also included the dreams of a future with equality and opportunities that had not yet seen. Those dreams included an explanation of the present struggles as temporary and described the present-day sacrifice to be for the greater good.

Common Terms used within the interview by participants were family, community, and church participation. These terms were used by all interviewed to describe sources of strength and support. The term family was used to describe parental support, extended family, siblings and also nonbiological members of the community that had close lasting relationships with the an individual or the family. Church participation included regular attendance, participation in various ministries (usher, choir, & Sunday school) and there was also mentioning's of the elders of the church that were examples of resilience pouring encouragement and scripture memorization into the children. Only one participant described her parents in her upbringing as more spiritual then religious but admitted to attending Christian services across the street from her home regularly. Community encompassed neighbors, church members, teachers, classmates, and strangers that were considered family or cared for as family.

The questions concerning their greatest disappointment and greatest triumph were asked to examine the presence of resiliency even within childhood. Their ability to bounce back or redirect hurt and pain to propel them forward was evident even in childhood. In spite of community disappointments, such as bullying, the harsh realities of

[195] Interviewee #2, Pg 91

segregation and the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. were some of the disappointment described during their upbringing.

What have been some determining factors in molding you into the woman you are today? Was answered with stories of support and encouragement from family and community. Also, a determination to succeed was fuel when faced with disadvantages brought on by race. One interviewee speaks specifically to growing up spending a lot of time in church and how the elder members of the congregation really spent time investing in them and how church was her second home. Two of the interviewees shared they live across the street from the church community they were a part of.

Research Limitations

With any study that attempts to share the experiences of a large group of people there will be limitations. This study was no different. There were some limitations that were present at the beginning of the study and others that arose once the study began. Soliciting strangers to share intimate memories and stories of the past with a stranger can be a hard task to accomplish. While there were over ten women that originally agreed to participate in the study ultimately only 5 actually completed the interview process. The requirements being African American women that identify as African American and have association with an African American church, and present within the United states from 1960-1970, with at least a knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement even if there were not participants themselves were the requirements for participants. One of the greatest limitations to this study was the sample size. While the participants were diverse in background and upbringing the sample was still limited. The women included in this

study have varying backgrounds and upbringings that can influence their recollection and perception of resiliency.

The interviews were originally desired to be completed face to face but due to the responses from women from various states this was not possible. The interviews were then conducted via Free Conference Call app. The interviewer and the interviewee called into a conference call line that provided privacy and conducted the interviews over the phone. This interview style could have created barriers in responses and comfort as well as accessibility with only a voice and not an actual person to be formally introduced to. Several of the women were interrupted during the interview by unidentified persons within their home at the time of the interview. The presence of others within the home at the time of the interview should be considered when asking questions about childhood traumas or oppression and the possibility of modifying the answer based on those present. The lack of intimacy and informality of a phone call with an unknown voice can create a rigidity within answers that may not allow interviewees to be as forthcoming as they may have been with the opportunity to meet with the interviewer face to face in a private location with no interruptions.

There was a possibility of tailoring the scope of theological resiliency to the point of ignoring additional factors that may have rose and influenced perception and epiphanies. Although theology has its objective basis, it is largely one's experience that shapes their view and recollection of events of faith. Due to the nature of faith and how personal faith and ones relationship with God can be articulating their understanding and application can be complicated. For these women to be asked to recall specifics of faith and resilience that occurred a lifetime ago can be difficult to fully recall and articulate.

Because of the nature of intersectionality, and the impression race, gender and class can leave, the practical theological tools and resources mentioned throughout the interview could be influences along with others in tandem to produce resiliency and not stand alone influencers that are hard to account for within a study of this magnitude.

Elders as Storytellers: The Keepers of the Faith

God commanded the people of Israel to retell their faith history to their children, so that you may know that I am the Lord, Exodus 10:2.[196] Historian Ivan Jaksic described an appreciation for oral history as a method that illustrates and enriches particularly by revealing the views and actions of those traditionally shut out.[197] The embodiment of history is a sacred and honored tradition amongst the Christian faith. The first forms of what we now know today as the Christian Gospels began as storytelling.[198] Parables and stories of Jesus miracles and acts were passed down from generation to generation orally first before they were ever written down.[199] These stories were told as a witness to the power of Jesus, to encourage believers and nonbelievers. The stories shared in this research study are an example of the embodiment of history. The participants described a time and a reality many African American women today will never know. The type of oppression that was described to live in a time of legal segregation can almost be seen as unbelievable, much like the miracles and life of Jesus. Without the keepers of the stories not only will the stories of Jesus and his life be absent but the stories of the courage the multitudes found within their faith in Jesus to speak against systematic oppression will

[196] Bobby Joe Saucer & Jean Alicia Elster, Our Help in Ages Past: The Black Church's Ministry among the Elderly, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005), 88.
[197] Ivan Jaksic, "Oral History in the Americas," The Journal of American History 79, 2 (Sept 1992), 591.
[198] Delbert Burkett, An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 124.
[199] Delbert Burkett, An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 124.

disappear. Just as Jesus was a living breathing text so are the elders of the faith community. Without the stories of the elders there would be a consistent and persistent void within history and theology. In places that has historically been Christian for centuries, the faith has come close to dying because its has turned a deaf ear to cultural change, the commitment to listening must be an enduring one.[200] The relationship between culture and faith cannot be ignored. The life stories of aging blacks are essential for racial survival, deliverance, liberation, empowerment, and recovery.[201]

The primary research question at hand is: What are the practical theological tools and resources of resilience that were utilized by African American women that came of age during the Civil Rights Movement. By utilizing Oral history within this study Jaksic's revelation is being reinforced by allowing those that are usually silenced and confined to the background to speak. Throughout my theological studies there has been a heavy emphasis on white male's voices, interpretations and experiences. There were very few opportunities to hear the voices of African American women and their theological influences. Seeing the absence of their voices, outside of a womanist theology conversation, left a void in my theological scholastic journey. In order to begin to bridge the gap felt within African American women and their faith practices some historical context needed to be shared. This study began with a historical overview of slavery in American before describing the birth of the black church, an institution born out of necessity ending with the birth of the Civil Rights Movement and a summary of resiliency research. This background information was necessary in order to understand

[200] Robert Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 40.
[201] Bobby Joe Saucer & Jean Alicia Elster, Our Help in Ages Past: The Black Church's Ministry among the Elderly, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005), 82.

that one faith, both lived and experience, is much more then what they do on a Sunday morning or within the confines of church walls. Robert Schreiter described this as the discovery of ones religious experience in a culture cannot be confined to the investigation of stated religious beliefs and practices.[202] From this understanding, of how to investigate ones faith, the best way to evaluate the tools and resources of practical theology utilized by these women was to evaluate those tools during a time of high stress but also great victory.

There are countless pictures in archives and museums of the Civil Rights Movement. These historic pictures are found in museums, churches, historic landmarks, and universities. Many of the pictures of marches, gatherings, and sit-ins show countless faces determinedly staring at the camera with captions that usually only mention the leaders placed in front by name. The pictures are filled from edge to edge with the focal point of these pictures on male leaders that can be readily identified and have had more than one book or article written about their life and leadership. Hats off to all the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. This study however is for the young lady usually to the left or the right or even standing behind said leader bright eyed, young, and just as determined as the identified leadership to live a life equal to her white counterparts. These faces fill the picture and make up the masses of the demonstrations and for decades have remained nameless. There stories only told from the vantage point of the leader they followed and not even in their own words but the words of what was usually a male leadership with no real idea of the life and impact the Civil Rights Movement had on

[202] Robert Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 43.

their lives. The stories told in this study, gave her perspective, insight, sacrifice and voice to what has been overshadowed in "his" story.

Going into this study my initial thoughts were on how many of these women were actual leaders if not in title but by the actions that they took to protest segregation and equal rights. Or how many of the women took on workloads exceeding the expectations of leaders to organize, communicate and maintain the protest against segregation but were never properly recognized. And did their sacrifices out weight some of those that were considered leaders? My original assumption was that the average participant in the Civil Rights Movement may have dealt with greater hardships then often imagined because there was no media attention following the average participant, just primarily focused on leadership. What I learned is that all participants young and old, male and female sacrificed, had rough days, and struggled to understand laws that declared African Americans less than their white counterparts simply because of the color of their skin. The goal at hand, for the Civil Rights Movement, was to eradicate the unfair laws that kept them separate and aided in their oppression. The rationale behind this being a theological endeavor and not a historical or political study was because what seemed to be the lifeline of this powerful and historic movement was the faith of the people. The theological interpretation and understanding that God stood with the oppressed was the metaphorical engine of the freedom train. Even within the historical records of slavery in the United States, as mentioned in chapter 2, spirituality played a key role in the survival of African American's. The negro spirituals previously mentioned were sang with dual meanings to share their faith and hope but also to pass messages amongst one another. This study is unique and highly relevant to theology because there hasn't been a study

that looks at the intersectional theology of the average participate in the Civil Rights Movement, particularly African American women in non-leadership roles. As mentioned in previous chapters Intersectionality is a tool for analysis that takes into account the simultaneously experienced multiple social locations, identities, and institutions that shape individual and collective experience within hierarchically structured systems of power and privilege.[203]It is only through an intersectional approach that the social justice issue of equality can be in dialogue with the faith practices and understandings of these ordinary African American women to articulate the practical theological tools and resources they used during this time.

This study is for the nameless girls in the historical pictures that don't occupy the front rows but is none the less important. This is her chance to not only be named but to share from their vantagepoint what it was like to come of age during the Civil Rights Movement and how that has affected them both then and now. So many questions arose for me when viewing historic photos about the mass's, majority women, that marched and their understanding of the impact their participation had. The stories of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement has been told again and again in film, books and articles but the effects of everyday participants that did not hold title or position is still vague. More importantly where did their faith place God during this time period. How was their faith shaped during this time and what practical theological tools did they foster during their upbringing? To my surprise during this study for many of the participants the very tools they discussed as being vital during their upbringing are the tools that they still apply to

[203] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 2.

life today. This was a great undertaking and came with no shortage of possible hiccups and limitations.

Community as Family: When One Wins, We All Win

Titus 2:3 says "Tell the older women… they are to teach…" The elders within the community have withstood the test of time and now are available as resources. It is the job of the community not to neglect what we have in search of what we don't have. The resources available within the elders of the community is a limited resource that will last as long as they do or will be lost forever with their death if not shared. As stated previously it is the unique job of the practical theologian to look at this community and ask the vital questions: What is going on?, Why is this going on?, What ought to be going on?, How might we respond?[204] For all the participants of this study they were a part of newly integrated communities either at school or at home. One of the revelations from this study is that community isn't always chosen. For some participants in the newly integrated community they felt welcomed while others expressed feelings of loneliness and isolation. The community that was chosen for them and the community that they chose to be a part of both left great impressions on these women. It was within the first interview that one interviewee shared her experience of being the first black family to integrate an all-white neighborhood. Along with moving into the neighborhood her and her siblings were among the first to integrate the neighborhood schools. This was not a welcomed event for some in the community and figures of the family were burned in their front yard. She went on to share her mother's younger sister, her aunt, became the first black homecoming queen in that school district and it was not received well by all.

[204] Osmer, Richard Robert (2008). Practical Theology: An Introduction. William B Eerdmans. p. 4. The Core Tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation.

Community has the power to influence and empower for love and acceptance or empower intolerance and hate.

As the community ages and elders pass on, the youth of today will be the elders of tomorrow. A better understanding of the practiced norms and not just what is described or said about a community is important. There are certain aspects of faith that are beyond explanation and are an unspoken practice meaning it is a norm that doesn't require explanation or instruction it is simply observed within a community or family. Theologically this can also be known as a local theology or habitus.[205] In order to adequately meet the faith-based needs of a community a level of knowledge concerning their local theologies and its constructs is required. Just as Ebonics is an urban dialect that uses common English words and has different meanings. Local theologies often have a different hermeneutic then mainstream Christianity.

The family described by the participates defied biological definitions and their definition of community did not abide by geographical restrictions. One interview recalls "I remember people not having a place to stay and my mother and them would take them in and they were like family.[206]" The respect one had for their parents was the same respect they had for the neighbor. One interviewee reflected on the celebration received by a beloved neighbor that was known throughout the community for celebrating the children that received good grades. Her reflection of this neighbor was a fond reflection that allowed her to go on to share that local children went out of their way to not only show their grades but hear stories from her about their great potential and describing their success in a world of equality. The sense of celebration was community wide. The

[205] Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of Theory of Practice (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books), 1972.
[206] Interviewee #1, Pg 81

sharing in gains and losses was described by one interviewee who shared her experience with her families participation in the Civil Rights Movement as a time of sacrifice for all without question, understanding that they were sacrificing not just for her own family but for the entire community. The sense of unity was admirable. The idea of community not just in neighbors but also as a community of faith was a practical theological tool that participant's spoke highly of. The memory of church mothers that would reprimand in love when a misstep occurred in church and that same figure was the Sunday school teacher that ensured lessons were learned and scriptures were memorized was the recollection of one interviewee. In describing the role of her church community in her upbringing one interviewee described it as followed " I spent a lot of time growing up in church and those older members really invested a lot of their time and love and so that was pretty much my second home.[207]" One of the virtues of community is that every movement, idea or program doesn't have to start from scratch but can begin with the wisdom of those who have come before. With such modern-day movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too there is a sense of community and understanding that allows people to share their personal stories of oppression and personal violation without feeling ostracized or alone. A study like this and future studies of this nature could be a great framework for future social justice movements. The one thing these communities lack that was the strength of the participants in this study was faith. The oneness of faith created community for people from all walks of life and ultimately lead them to victory in what is arguably one of the most successful movements in American history. The participation of church communities created a common ground for people experiencing

[207] Interviewee #2, Pg 93

discrimination that explained the lawful act of segregation as not only morally wrong but theologically wrong as well. The exegesis of scriptural, to allow people of faith to stand with a movement like The Dreamers, is lacking understanding of their place in such a movement. Because of the lack of clear theological explanation for social justice and against hate many church communities remain silent opting for a neutral role in social and political discussions with a focus solely on faith-based matters. The church communities silence is not only dangerous it is complacent to allow injustice to continue.

One of the revelations that stood out the most were the words of one participant that shared when in high school she was one of the first students to segregate what use to be an all-white school. When the time came for her and her sister to apply for college and scholarships none of the administration would help them. She explained "We kept pushing. We applied for all of our colleges alone because they wouldn't help us.[208]" She describes herself as not discouraged but knew she would simply have to figure it out on her own and draw strength from her community, her sister, and move forward with her applications. She went on to describe failure as not an option. Even then the resilience was forming and blossoming in her life. Another participant share being forced to learn the words to the song it is well in my soul, she did so reluctantly and admittedly did not like the song, only to find great comfort and meaning in it later in life. The grandmother that required her to learn the song she did not like as a child, she wanted to thank as an adult. These instances stood out to me and impacted me personally because they show the seeds of faith that bloomed resiliency well before the individuals realized it.

[208] Interviewee #5, Pg 127.

One of the greatest take away from this study was the emphasis and value of community. For the faith community, that has statistically seen decline in attendance, this is a win that shows what a positive impact being a part of a faith-based community can have. Practical Theology has always been a theology of the community. It is through the examples given within basic Christian principles that share the notion of community. Even in the examples to pray others were ever present with the first word of the lord's prayer being "Our Father" Prayer and communication with God was throughout the study results almost so that it was an unspoken practical theological tool because it was just something one does. For many of the explanations expressing community, church activity and upbringing the terms family, church and community were interchangeable. The community that rallied around the young ladies in protection and to help them grow was also some of the same people they attended church with and included their family, a family that was defined beyond blood ties.

The Role of the Black Church

Ageism isn't typically prevalent within the African American church. Many pastors and leaders remain in their position well into old age and only vacate the position in death.[209] It is the moral and spiritual perception of women and their worth along with public practices of sexual practices, sexual harassment and abuse that keeps women inferior even within a fight for equality. The church has been one of the greatest advocates of patriarchal roles that deems a woman subordinate in spite of her gifts, abilities, and talents.[210] Despite abuse and neglect from sexist practices of the church

[209] N. Lynn Westfield, Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 12.
[210] Traci C. West, Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 38.

African American women still show a loyalty and faithfulness to church like no other demographic. Dr. Renita Weems wrote "African American Women and the Bible" in *Stony the Road we Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* African American women have continued to read the bible in most instances because of its vision and promise of a world where the humanity of everyone will be fully valued. They have accomplished this reading in spite of the voices from within and without that have tried to equivocate on that vision and promise.[211]

There must be a charge to the black church if research of this nature is to continue. Focusing a study examining clergy and their understanding of shepherding multifaceted women and how they view the multiple layers influence faith is worth exploring. It would be a disservice to the very women and community that research wants to assist if we don't look at sexism and its affects on the faith of the very women that march and protest both then and now alongside African American men only to return to faith gatherings and be ostracized because of their gender. What's next for the relationship between African American women and clergy would require a reconciliation for the complete disregard for their femininity. For Clergy, mostly men, a interpretation of the bible that allowed men to be liberated but ordained the oppression of women is an admission that needs to be recognized and resolved.

Our interactions and support of the oldest in our community is not only socially important it is theologically imperative. N. Lynn Westfield identified five practices that African American women described as attributing to their resilience: gathering,

[211] Cain Hope Felder, Stony the Road we Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, Fortress, 1991), 13.

pleasuring, playing, praying, and learning.[212] Three of the five practices were described within the interviews as occurring within their church. The role of the black church is vital within the black community providing at least three, learning, praying and gathering, of the five practices that attribute to resiliency. From the participants descriptions it seems that there was a time when family, church and community were so intertwined that the three could not easily be separated. The church and its community were credited as being a source of resiliency and strength at a young age for some of the participants. Even interviewee's that did not actively participate in church gatherings they still shared faith as a source of strength. The teachings as a child in Sunday school and from respected and beloved elders within the church is what left a great impression on the participants of this study. One quotes Psalms 23 as a scripture that had to be memorized as a child in Sunday school that she still remembers and has quoted as a source of strength throughout her life. The role of the church is still a vital entity, even if the importance isn't as obviously seen as it has been in the past. One interviewee described church as "a central part of life.[213]" One of the greatest aspects of the historical black church was the intersectional theological practices. The awareness and activism of the local church in the Civil Rights Movement alongside their regularly scheduled church activities was a great example of intersectional theology and the intertwined reality of being a person of faith and an African American. Not only did the black church of the 60's have an understanding of Jesus as an advocate for the oppressed there was a belief

[212] N. Lynn Westfield, Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 3.
[213] Interviewee #4, Pg 108.

that God was on their side and went before them in the fight for equality. A correlation between the Hebrew slaves of Exodus and African American slaves was common.[214]

The negro spirituals, sang during enslavement and the Civil Rights Movement, reflect an understanding that related heavily to the Israelites enslaved by pharaoh. For many of the participants and others they mentioned within their community the church was the place where foundational wisdom was gained. It was in church where they learned the stories of freed slaves within scriptures. The scriptures of freedom and faith that were memorized and recited both in religious services and while marching were scriptures they learned from regular participation in their local church. A person with a faith background can take such mentions of Moses, Pharaoh and Jesus suffering for granted and assume it is common knowledge the scriptures that contain the details of these stores. “Go Down Moses” and “Wait in the Water” are both hymns that speak to maintaining faith in times of oppression and God will deliver. These songs are not however popular songs today and if asked most churches do not sing this genre of song anymore. The interwoven relationship of faith and social justice was so intertwined that if one wasn’t versed on traditions of black churches it may be overlooked the faith references and explanations. The churches role as a safe place for anyone that believed in equality was the embodiment of womanist theology defined as the uplifting of not just African American women but of all people in community regardless of gender or color.

The role of the church today is not as clearly defined and almost seems to shun an intersectional theology for a universal look at God and faith. For many black churches within the United States they have traded in a gospel of freedom for a gospel of

[214] Cain Hope Felder, Stony the Road we Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, Fortress, 1991), 123.

prosperity. As the focus of the church shifted so did its value in fostering community and relationships. With the change of these values the foundation of community and social justice the church once rested on also changed. Social Justice and ministry are not readily identified as partners but sometimes treated as polar opposites. The emphasis on church as a vital form of community is diminished at best. In a technology age where religious gatherings can be views in the comfort of your home on a device, community is becoming less and less important. This focus on the individual instead of the community counter to one of the participants of the Civil Rights Movements greatest strengths and that was their numbers. The greatest strength of the marches sit ins and boycotts was the sheer number of people that participated. The numbers while varied form movement to movement was still too many to ignore and immediately brought attention to their cause. While the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made great strides towards equality and left a great impact from his speeches it was the masses that stood with him that made the greatest impact. The nameless young men and women that stood with him, marched and were even beaten with him that caused people to sit up and pay attention and ultimately outlaw segregation.

What makes this study uniquely a theological study is the emphasis on the identity of faith. This was not a social justice movement alone but for its participants a theological movement and in this theological movement God was on the side of the oppressed and had been since their enslavement. This narrative and understanding of faith and the positioning of God was a part of the participants understanding of themselves and their understanding of God. To quote one of the interviewees “Faith is

knowing that I am not alone. Whatever I'm going through God is with me."[215] Within the earlier historical data presented the conception of the African American church was described. The birth of an African American church was out of necessity to speak to the unique faith experience and understandings of its people, that need has not changed. While the specifics may have changed or been altered by our evolving society the need for the black church as an institution still stands. This kind of anchored faith understanding, and explanation does not happen in isolation. The church is a vital entity to the vitality of thriving African American communities.

Theological Reflection

One of the original assumptions beginning this study was that Womanist Theology was an adequate vehicle to transport and sustain this study. The assumption of womanist theology encasing the entire journey of African American women was proven to be inadequate. It was not until the womanist writings came into conversation with that of Kimberle' Crenshaw and intersectionality that the inadequacies of womanist theology encompassing the totality of African American women's experience. Sometimes in an effort to be heard and affirmed we can accept in adequate resources because at least they speak to a truer understanding of self then others. As a self-proclaimed womanist theologian, I found myself searching for a theology that spoke to more than just my gender and race. It was through a multifaceted lens that this study was able to show the many aspects of life that affect one's interpretation and understanding of God. Intersectional theology calls us as individual Christians to examine our own commitments to justice and the extent of our actual embrace of differences within our

[215] Interviewee #3, Pg 100.

practice of faith in daily life.[216]While most historical Christian movements are told by white males as the voice for all, they fall short of understanding the privilege and biases that come from this vantage point. Aside from a few male minority voices and even less women voices, there weren't any voices that spoke to the multidimensional theological experiences of African American women. The lessons, revelations and questions that they grappled with as a distinct group were missing from the conversation.

Faith is interpreted through one's reality and lived by their understanding of where God is both during their suffering and their success. The notion of being black and female is acknowledged as a type of double jeopardy for example in Feminist activist Frances Beals' 1969 essay "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" there are few that acknowledge the triple threat that many women face: to be black, female, and poor. The tools that are utilized during these times are a resource that should not be forgotten or neglected but adapted, taught, and applied. The lessons in intersectionality and womanist theology teach us that our faith isn't something you wake up and decide to wear as a role or title. These women lived out their theology in a way that taught greater than any written text. For most participants their faith was ingrained in their journey for equal rights, their journey for education and every other part of their lives without question. The depth of the ordinary African American woman's experiences are immeasurable. The definition of womanist theology includes that it is a theology that desires for the whole community to prosper and the theological reflections of these women demonstrated that. To neglect one member of society is to neglect us all. As previously stated, when we empower and make room for the ordinary African American woman to share in her

[216] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan Shaw, "Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 79.

practical theology we not only teach and empower her we teach and empower the community at large.

As an African American woman born in the south this research study was important and personal to me. This study felt like an opportunity to give a platform to the neighborhood shero's. Those shero's are everyday women that pour into the community despite their own disadvantages and champion for the success of all those around her many times a success she herself has never attained but wishes for those coming after her to succeed and achieve. Women that are often overlooked or ignored completely. If we aren't careful, we can ignore the very voices of resiliency and hope that come into our lives to inspire and challenge us to go further. After completing interviews and the initial write ups I was proud to share with people my research focus and enjoyed the praise and inquiries from people wanting to know more about the lives of the women interviewed. After completing interviews and write ups declaring the tragedy it would be for the voice of our elders to be ignored, I found myself guilty of falling into the very trap I had warned others about. Upon boarding a plane for some planned rest and a visit with a friend from undergrad. I put on my headphone to listen to music throughout the flight, after taking my seat, when the little old lady sitting beside me lightly tapped me on the knee, so lightly that if I hadn't seen her do it, I certainly wouldn't have felt it. She was simply greeting me. I politely smiled and greeted her back keeping my headphones on. She said something I can't hear. I adjust one headphone and listen close; she's asking if my final destination is home. I answered I am going to see a friend and replace the headphones she continues the conversation. I wrestled with if I should ignore her or remove my headphones and participate in the conversation. She looked at me again,

mouth moving and smiled. I removed my headphones and turned off the music. I realized she really wanted to talk, and I can always listen to my music later, reluctantly I put the headphones away. She begins to share with me her travel plans. I listened. She goes on to share her story about her three children, eleven grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. She also shares her devastation in losing one of her sons and her husband twenty-three years ago, assuring me that time hasn't made it any easier nor has she stopped missing them both. She went on to express her hope for me that I never know the grief she knows from burying a beloved child and spouse. I shared with her my age, that I was married and the ages of my three children. She exclaimed in surprise that she thought I was a teenager. Because I revealed my age, she shares proudly that she was fifty years older than me and didn't believe she looked her age which was 86 years old. My mind immediately went to the women I have interviewed for this study and their stories. Although I never asked her name, she shared with me that she is fighting colon cancer for the second time and refused treatment. She didn't want the hassle and isn't afraid of the inevitable outcome. I was shocked and yet amazed as she had previously shared plans to travel and see friends along with family. I asked her only one question the entire two- and one-half hour flight. Where does your resiliency come from? Many people would be defeated to live your life and experience the loss of a beloved son and husband along with a second cancer battle. She looked over at me and shrugged as if it were not a big deal and said, my faith. This nameless woman I most likely will never see again, shared her story even with what few details I have it is my hope to honor her faith and resiliency just as the women that were interviewed for this research study.

I began this study wanting to give voice to the nameless women that make up the majority of participants in the Civil Rights demonstrations. My flight experience is a mirror of how many experience life. In the rush to get to our final destination we don't take time to stop and engage those we are taking the journey with. If we don't slow down and take off the metaphorical headphones in our lives, we will miss the timeless treasures that come from those we meet along the way.

Future Work: The Past is Prologue

A young boy was told by his father about the many conquests of hunters over lions. This story intrigued the little boy but he was puzzled and inquired: "If the lion is supposed to be the king of the jungle, why is it that the hunter always wins?" the father responded: "The hunter will always win until the lion writes his own story!"[217] This is only the beginning. The fight for equality has made strides but is not complete, oppression is still alive and well. In an effort to defeat oppression, we must start with who is being left out. Much like the illustration given we cannot leave the storytelling to the hunter (majority) alone, the lion (minority) must have its day. Additional interviews and studies, to expand the research sample and be more inclusive in hearing the practical theological tools used by African American women, must occur.

The seeds planted by the previous generation must be acknowledged so that the fruit maybe shared and enjoyed as a means of sustaining and empowering the next generation. Intergenerational dialogue is a must. This study highlights the circle of time and life. The young ladies that were participants in the Civil Rights Movement that gleaned from their elders are now themselves elders with the charge to equip the next

[217] Cain Hope Felder, Stony the Road we Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, Fortress, 1991), 98.

generation and soon this generation will be the elders with the same charge. With this understanding the hearer will one day become the story teller and in the words of Author Bobby Joe Saucer their stores become ours and their lives merge with ours to create a shared experience in which not only are the people enriched but so is their faith and community.[218] Moving forward in continuing this study I would ask questions that require deeper theological reflection. In an effort to better gauge the participants theological understanding and application since their upbringing. Questions that would include but aren't limited to: What do you believe the role of the holy spirit is in times of oppression? Is resiliency a theological concept alone and if not, where is it located outside of faith? Because there were women that did not meet the age requirement for this study that did reach out to participate a continuation of these interview is warranted. The research must go on. The participants of the Civil Rights Movement are aging and soon there won't be any living to tell the story firsthand. All that will be left of those that marched and lived through out that time in history is the books, writings, and films. It would be a disservice to the time and the people not to include the narratives of the non-leadership participants. The possibilities for books or documentaries to document these stories is certainly an option for future researchers allowing their stores to live on. If churches were to take on studies of this nature and apply it to their teaching understanding and interpretation of scripture it would give way to new theological understanding of faith and identity. Much like what is taught through intersectional theology, people are not living in just one experience but are an association of experiences layered upon one another. While there was an assumption before this study

[218] Bobby Joe Saucer & Jean Alicia Elster, Our Help in Ages Past: The Black Church's Ministry among the Elderly, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005), 89.

began that such research could assist with intergenerational discussion, the presence of intersectionality and the discovery of the value of interdisciplinary dialogue was a new revelation.

Professionally there is an obligation of the practical theologian to tell the stories of those that cannot, or have not been given the opportunity, to speak for themselves. A great asset to the field of theology would be continued research on the relationship between intersectionality and womanist theology. The faith practices and understanding of a person marginalized because of their race and their gender can be very different from some of the understandings of theology that are currently being utilized throughout the academy. The practical theological tools identified through continued interviews and research can be the basis for academic curriculum as well as the framework for mentoring programs particularly due to the heavy emphasis on community as one of their greatest sources of strength. Discussion tours that allow the stories to -be heard and allow participants to dive deeper into their understanding of faith and resiliency and the relationship of the two would be a great step forward in continuing along this research path. Giving elders space to speak and share their faith is an act spoken highly upon with in scripture, in Psalms 71:18 it reads "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come."

In light of current movements such as Black Lives Matter, Say Her Name, & Me Too the stories of those who have fought in the past for injustice can fuel those that continue the fight today. The 'Me Too.' movement was founded in 2006, by an African American woman by the name of Tarana Burke, to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth

communities, find pathways to healing.[219] Women in search of safe spaces to rest and heal is not a new narrative and doesn't have to be a new concept if the stories of women are allowed to be told and received by receptive, respectful listeners. Sharing the faith practices of African American women in the face of persistent oppression can be a catalyst for surviving, healing and thriving. The people of God must care enough to listen. We must not forget.

[219] https://metoomvmt.org/about/, accessed February 1, 2020.

Appendix A

Initial Letter to Interviewees

Dear participant,

My name is Terisha Bennett-Lee I am a PhD student at St. Thomas University pursuing a degree in practical theology. The completion of a doctoral dissertation is a part of my program as criteria for graduation. I am asking for your voluntary participation in an interview exploring upbringing, family, theological, educational, formal and informal interactions and impressions left upon you during the years 1950-1970. You may choose not to answer any questions asked of you and can discontinue the interview at any time. Your name will be confidential and withheld from the final draft of the dissertation with only my committee and I having access to the raw data.

First and last initial or an alias will be assigned to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of all participants. The interview in audio and written format will be held for 3 years before all written and audio material will be destroyed and deleted. If you have any information or would like to request questions, would like further a copy of the interview please feel free to reach out to me with the provided Contact information.

Terisha Bennett-Lee

Your signature acknowledges that you are willingly participating in this research study and are aware that your participation is voluntary in nature.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Introductory Questions

- Can you tell me your birthday?
- How old are you?
- Where were you born?
- Where were you raised?

Primary Questions

- How would you describe your childhood, describe the community you grew up in?
- In your day to day ordinary activities how were you aware or active in the Civil Rights Movement?
- What kind of participation did you see from friends and family in the CRM?
- Can you define resilience for me in your own words?
- What have been some determining factors in molding you into the woman you are today?
- Can you describe specific tools used regularly in your upbringing for motivation or inspiration? Such as songs, a specific pep talk, scriptures, word of advice, family rules, club membership, etc.
- What was your most significant personal triumph AND disappointment during the Civil Rights Movement?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the Civil Rights Movement, Practical Theological practices of the time, or any other pertinent information?

Appendix C

Instructional Review Board (IRB) Approval Form

Institutional Review Board

16400 N.W. 32nd Ave., Miami, Florida 33054
Proposal Approval Form
St. Thomas University

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. Mary Carter Waren supervising Doctoral Candidate Terisha Bennett Lee

PROJECT TITLE: Radiating Resilience: The Practical Theology of the Nameless Women Participants of the Civil Rights Movement

in accordance with St. Thomas University policy and national guidelines governing the ethical use of human participants in research, the university Institutional Review Board certifies that the above stated project:

____ being exempt from full review was peer reviewed by the IRB under the expedited review process and in its original form was

_X___ was revised according to suggestions made by the IRB to the investigators and was

_____ being subject to a full review by the IRB was

REVISION REQUESTED ON ___

APPROVED ON August 2018

DISAPPROVED ON _____

Investigators may request continuation of a project using the IRB project submittal form and procedure.

Human Subjects are adequately informed of any risks:

Gary Feinberg, Ph.D.

Gary Feinberg, Ph.D.
Chair, St. Thomas University IRB
Date: August 2018

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