Preaching Black Lives (Matter)

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Beginning Words

Kwasi Thornell

The Rev. Dr. Kwasi Thornell was ordained an Episcopal priest in 1972. He has always pushed the envelope of what it is to be Black and Episcopalian. We are called to remember our roots, remember our heritage, who God has created us to be, and bring all of that to the Episcopal Church. In his own words . . .

It was a beautiful day on that Saturday morning in Chicago in 1989. People had come from all over the country to St. James Episcopal Cathedral to celebrate the homegoing service for our sister Mattie Hopkins. The Rev. Ed Rodman would say that Mattie Hopkins was the "Mother of the Union." She was there from the beginning of the Union of Black Episcopalians with her quiet and insightful leadership skills. As a member of Trinity Church, she was active in her church, the diocese, and on the national church level, always moving the church to be what it should be and a forceful advocate for the Episcopal members of a darker hue. She often could be seen sporting African clothing and wore a short Afro hairstyle before many of our sisters were ready to make this statement of beauty.

The funeral service was grand in its Episcopal liturgical style. In the procession were several bishops as well as many clergy and lay leaders from the progressive side of the church. The addition of hymns from *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, the Episcopal African American hymnal, gave the service that Black church feel that Mattie would have appreciated. The casket sat on a platform that was covered with a beautiful piece of Kente cloth: bright reds, yellows, and oranges that stood in stark contrast to the traditional heavy pall of gold and white brocade that covered the casket. A statement was being made, one way or another; we just were not sure what it was.

The preacher said all the right things about the witness of Mattie to church and society. A few "amens" could be heard bouncing around the stone columns of the cathedral. The service moved forward in perfect order and, as it was coming to a close, we joined in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing." During the singing of what many call the Black national anthem, I realized what was wrong with the symbolism of the casket sitting "on" the Kente cloth. Something had to be done. Richard Tolliver, Ed Rodman, Earl Neal, and Jesse Anderson Jr., all priests, were seated with me to the left of the altar. I said to them, "Follow me," and, to my surprise, they all did. As we approached the casket, I said, "Lift it up," and they did. I pulled the Kente cloth out from under the casket and, in an act that would make traditional altar guild members faint, we covered the *Episcopal* white and gold brocade pall with the royal African cloth that a queen of Africa deserved. It truly was an act of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be Black in the Episcopal Church?

Introduction

Gayle Fisher-Stewart

We're still segregated in so many ways. . . . Every Sunday, I look out and, with one or two exceptions, I see all white faces. I bet most of the people in my church don't have any black friends. They know people who are of color, but because they don't associate with them, stereotypes and tensions can flourish.
—The Rev. Ray Howell[1]

What is it to be Black and Christian; to be Black and Episcopalian; to be Black and a member of a White denomination? To be unapologetically Black and unashamedly Christian; those words greet you on the website of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois. Trinity is a Black church in a White denomination. It is a church that is proud of its roots in the Black religious experience. It is a church that claims its African heritage. It is a church that has clung to the values of the original Black churches in this country: a proud people, steeped in their belief in a Jesus who looks like them and knows their suffering; congregations involved in educating and uplifting their people.[2]

To be unapologetically Black and unashamedly Christian, that is also the journey on which we join the Rev. Dr. James Cone as he leads us through the twists and turns as he discovers himself, discovers the self that is the Black theologian. In *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, his memoir finished shortly before his death in April 2018, Cone challenges us, his Black people, to stop hating who we are. It is time to love the reflection of God we see in the mirror. It is time to stop chasing after Whiteness. I write, as Cone commands, for my people, those who are part of a church—the Episcopal Church—whose roots are in the birthing of slavery. For my people who are witnessing their churches, begun because of the racism in the Episcopal Church, wither away because of gentrification and benign neglect by the Episcopal Church. Cone offers, "When you write, you need to know *who* you are writing for and *what* message you want to deliver to them and *why* you feel the need to say what you've got to say."[3]

1. The Rev. Ray Howell, pastor, First Baptist Church, Lexington, NC, "Racial Slur Reveal's a County's Deep Rift," *Washington Post*, October 22, 2019, A-1, 6.

2. Trinity United Church of Christ, accessed July 2, 2019, *https://www.trinitychicago.org/the-history-of-trinity/*.

3. James H. Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody* (New York: Orbis Books, 2018), 22.

And so, I write for my people, my Black siblings who still strive for Whiteness; who shun Black worship, Black religious music; who shun themselves. And I write for my non-Black siblings who see Blackness as less than, something to be feared, something to be avoided at all costs; who believe that to be Episcopalian, we must be like them; like a mold that is all things Anglican; who believe that White theology is the only theology. I also write for my Black siblings who find themselves in other White denominations.

Since the sixteenth century, Christian theology has been implicated in the denial of Black humanity in this country and that denial continues today. Christian theology has defined who was human by exclusion; taking upon itself the power to define who was heathen, who was uncivilized, who was unworthy of God's grace, by using the measuring rod of Whiteness comingled with theology.[4] Anti-Black racism is alive and well in the Church, including the Episcopal Church. Regardless of the Church's claims, our society has never been modeled after the way of Jesus Christ. Rather, as Drew G. I. Hart writes, the White, wealthy, Western male has been the image promoted and adopted. From Constantine, to Thomas Jefferson, to Donald Trump, the White male has been lifted up as the standard against which all people are measured and Jesus has been fashioned into a White man. Hart writes, "With a pseudo-white male Jesus let loose in the church, the boundaries of acceptable theological reflection have neatly aligned with powerful, elite American (white) male interests."[5] Just as to be *American* is to be White, *theology* is White and all who are not White must find themselves in "Black theology," "Womanist theology," "Latin American theology," "Queer theology," and others, to be whole, to be who God created us to be, while Whites just have to be White.

It is time to throw off a colonized mind as it relates to being American and Christian, Christian and Episcopalian. Franz Fanon is correct in his assessment that a colonized people participate in their own oppression by emulating and internalizing the culture and ideas of the oppressor.[6] In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire agrees with Fanon in that he offers that those who are oppressed have been conditioned to fashion themselves after the oppressor,

4. Santiago Slabodsky, "It's the Theology, Stupid! Coloniality, Anti-Blackness, and the Bounds of 'Humanity,'" in *Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics*, ed. Vincent W. Lloyd and Andrew Prevot (New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 32–35.

5. Drew G. I. Hart, *Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2016), 160–61.

6. Peter D-Errico, "What Is a Colonized Mind?" *Indian Country Today*, December 12, 2011, *https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/what-is-a-colonized-mind-yMyi0CHjMEO_HV3uM7caRQ*.

the colonizer.[7] This is not to say that those who trace their lineage to various tribes and countries in Africa cannot be Christian and Episcopalian (or members of other White denominations); rather, it means we must, as Freire offers, constantly assess the teachings of the church and decide which are favorable to us. We must make being Christian and Episcopalian (or any other White denomination) our own. Why? Because colonization has contributed to racial self-hatred. The colonizing efforts of the Europeans led to the suppression of indigenous religion, customs, and traditions of those who survived the Middle Passage and their heirs. The veneration of ancestors, "holy dancing and shouting, deity possessions, and drumming"[8] were considered by European colonizers as pagan and savage and were destroyed through torture and other punishments to complete the control over their human chattel. A desire to recover those traditions and customs beaten and bred out of God's people of ebony grace led Teresa P. Mateus to create the Mystic Soul Project, an organization that creates "space for activism, mysticism, and healing by and for people of color."[9] Mateus felt a need to create these spaces for people of color because she didn't see herself reflected in spiritual practices centered in Whiteness. In these spaces—conferences, retreats—people of color gather and have the freedom where they are able to shake off the shackles of suppression and oppression and celebrate all of themselves.

For the Church to reflect Jesus, there must be a White metanoia—a White repentance—because the shame of slavery is not ours; it is the sole property of White people. Colonization has taught us to bear the shame of something that was done to us as opposed to putting it squarely in the laps of those who denied us humanity, in and out of the Church. To be Black is not to be deficient, or defective; we are just different. Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud and I want to be me, to see me in whatever Church I may be a member. On occasion, the Episcopal Church will trot out Blackness, usually during Black History Month or other special, read *ethnic*, occasions.

On the other hand, it seems we have a church that is more interested in maintaining the institution than it is in taking a chance, risking it all, as Jesus did, and changing this world into what God created it to be. Jesus, God incarnate, came to earth to show how the world could be if God's people would just

7. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 20th anniv. ed. (New York: Continuum, 1997), 27.

8. L. H. Whelchel Jr., *The History and Heritage of African-American Churches: A Way Out of No Way* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2011), 82.

9. Da'Shawn Mosley, "Recentering Spirituality: Creating Space for Activism, Mysticism, and Healing by and for People of Color," *Sojourners* 47, no. 11 (December 2018): 16–18.

get with the program and follow him into the margins where those who have been excluded by a world that commodifies humanness will be found. The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, has stated that we should be challenged to change the world from the nightmare human beings have made it into the dream God wants it to be. That is a rough, a tough pronouncement, certainly not something you want on signboard, that the world, in its current state, is a nightmare. Or perhaps the nightmare should be the truth we proclaim and claim. Perhaps if the truth of what the world has become was on the lips of all who call themselves Christians, the Church could be a place where we come to gird up our loins to get into the battle against the forces that long for a White America and Church.

Since 2017 the Rev. Yolanda Norton[10] has been the inspiration behind the Beyoncé Mass, first held at Christ Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco. In the promo for the mass, the Rev. Jude Harmon says:

> I think a lot of the people who show up tonight are people of color, LGBT people, people onto whom other people's narratives have been projected and just to be honest, the church hasn't been the best at lifting up those voices. [The service] really began with us saying, how can we actually be the people of God we hope to be in the world. . . . Honestly, I think Beyoncé is a better theologian than many of the pastors and priests in our church today. That is not an exaggeration.[11]

As the Rev. Yolanda Norton offers, using the music of Beyoncé enabled her to have conversations about Black women, their worship, and their spirituality.[12] All too often, particularly in mainstream, dominant culture denominations, the worship culture is White and overseen by men. Those who enter are expected to leave their religious culture(s) at the door and assimilate to the proper way of worship. And while Black women (and men) serve in all capacities in the Episcopal Church, that does not mean that the stained glass ceiling has been forever cracked or dismantled in other denominations. It does not mean that our Black churches, historically and otherwise, and Black denominations, created and maintained by racism, are thriving. Nor does it mean that

10. The Rev. Dr. Yolanda Norton is assistant professor of New Testament at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

11. "The Church Service That Worships Beyonce," YouTube, May 17, 2017, *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXci-sRayAQ&t=202s*.

12. "The Church Service That Worships Beyonce," YouTube.

non-Whites and our LGBTQIA+ siblings have found recognition and freedom of worship at all levels of the Church at large.

This book announces from the very top of the mountain that Black people (and others) are created by and in the image of a loving God and the contributors are willing to speak their truth to change the world and the Church. The contributors have the ability to see the great multitude pictured in Revelation 7:9:

> After this I looked, and there a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. . . .

Life has gotten better for African Americans since the 1950s when our schools were legally segregated, when I watched my cousin's father who looked White go into a country store to purchase ice for our outing after my father had been denied because of his skin color. Things have changed, even from the 1970s, as I patrolled the streets of Washington, DC, as a police officer. In some sections of the city, I would be met with "Can they send a White officer?" or "Would you go to the back door?" Yes, things have changed; however, as more things change, the more things remain the same or get worse.

In *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons*, Imani Perry writes of the fear she has for her two Black sons in a society that denies their humanity.[13] Kelly Brown Douglas writes:

> Every time he [her son] leaves the house I pray, "God please be my eyes, and be my hands, watch over my son and bring him safely home." I am sure that I am not the only black mother who prays such a prayer when her black child, especially a black male child, leaves home. . . . So I tremble at the thought that the world is not safe for our sons because if God cannot protect them who can?[14]

How many Black mothers and fathers sit in our pews wondering if God cares enough to protect our children from White racism? Is there a word from the Church?

On the other side of the coin, as we look at the church, the Diocese of Vermont elected and consecrated its first African American female diocesan

13. Imani Perry, *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019).

14. Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 130.

bishop, Shannon McVean-Brown, in 2019. Vermont is 95 percent white. In 2016, the Diocese of Indianapolis elected and consecrated the first female African American diocesan bishop in the history of the Episcopal Church, Jennifer Baskerville Burrows. The first African American male elected diocesan bishop was John Burgess in 1970. In 2015, Michael Curry was consecrated as the first African American presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. Yes, there have been moments to make your heart flutter and say, perhaps, just perhaps, things have changed, but then there is the soul crushing, *but.*

In November 2019, at the Indianapolis diocesan convention, one of the contributors, the Very Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas, dean of the Episcopal Divinity School, delivered the keynote address in which she stated, "It is only in speaking the truth about the White supremacist legacy that is ours that we will be truly able to repent of it and turn around and do something different. . . . [We need to be honest about] who we are, who we have been, and who we want to be as the Church. The Church cannot be White and Church; a decision has to be made." [15]

Yes, we have made great strides in this country in race relations; however, eleven o'clock on Sunday is still the most segregated hour in this country. If the Church cannot lead the way to the beloved community, who can? Who will? To what degree does the Church care? Is it willing to risk it all to make the face and mission of Jesus real in the world? Brené Brown has offered that to continue to ask those who are traumatized by bigotry and hatred to build the table and ask others to join is wrong. It is those who continue to benefit from racism who must do the hard work.[16] The Church, particularly the Episcopal Church as the Church of England, birthed racism in this country; therefore, the Episcopal Church must take the lead in its eradication. It began racism on these shores through the adoption of slavery; therefore, it must hold itself responsible for doing whatever is necessary to make God's kingdom real on earth because for all too many who deal with racism every day, heaven can wait.

I want to thank the writers who contributed to this work because dealing with race is difficult. Writing and discussing race makes one vulnerable to attack from those who believe this country and the Church are theirs. Writing and discussing race is soul- and gut-wrenching work; however, it is holy work.

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15. The Very Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas, "The Work Our Soul Must Do," keynote address, November 15, 2019, *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLTDDFSxMVA&t=2058s*.

16. Brené Brown, "The Quest for True Belonging and Courage to Stand Alone," interview on *The IA*, September 12, 2017, *https://the1a.org/shows/2017-09-12/brene-brown-the-quest-for-true-belonging-and-the-courage-to-stand-alone*.

Dealing with race also requires that we admit our own complicity in upholding a system that is contrary to the life and mission of Jesus; that at times, we have permitted our religiosity to become the opiate that dulls our senses to the reality that all too many of God's sun-kissed children experience every day of their lives. While the majority of the writers are Episcopalian, other voices have contributed their take on race and the Church. Jesus transgressed boundaries and borders and in the eradication of race, the Church, the body of Christ, must get beyond its own borders and lines of demarcation to be what the Church is called to be. I also want to thank Church Publishing and Milton Brasher-Cunningham, the editor of this book; they took a chance on a very wild journey.

We begin this journey with sermons that challenge us to think about race: sermons that require a risk to be preached from the pulpit. Preaching is holy work; however, it is also fraught with danger. There are many in our pews who view preaching about race as being too political and will challenge the pastor, leave the church, or withdraw their funding. But preach we must. Then we move on to reflections and essays on advocating for Black lives in the Church and society. These essays stretch us to see Church in ways that are truly inclusive, that encourage us to ensure that our churches are sanctuaries for all God's people. Finally, we hear the call to rethink or expand Christian formation, from our seminaries to our sanctuaries. As we take this journey, there are reflections from pilgrims who traveled the Civil Rights Trail in Alabama with me in May 2019. Fifty-two people of faith—mostly Episcopalian, but also Baptist, Mennonite—and atheist, Black and White, young and not-so-young, gay and straight, clergy and lay, traveled together for five days, to learn from those involved in the struggle for Black civil and human rights. We learned from being in the company of each other and we learned from each other.

I hope these offerings begin or continue the conversations that must occur to create opportunities for people to gather and be "proximate" in the words of Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) founder Bryan Stevenson,[17] to be open to hearing voices that challenge, voices that cry out for God's justice in this time and in this place. Perhaps, just perhaps, if these conversations occur, the Church can truly be the body of Christ in a world that desperately needs God's justice today.

17. Bryan Stevenson, "Get Proximate to People Who are Suffering" (commencement address given at Bates College, May 27, 2018), *https://www.bates.edu/news/2018/05/27/get-proximate-to-people-who-are-suffering-bryan-stevenson-tells-bates-college-commencement-audience/*.

PART 1

Preaching Black Lives Matter

1

Introduction

IS THERE A WORD FROM THE LORD?

Gayle Fisher-Stewart

We really "had church today!" is a familiar expression among African Americans following a Spirit-filled worship experience. The implication of this folksy phrase is that the Spirit of God had moved with such power that all social barriers were removed and worshipers were able to "have a good time in the Lord." The passionate, celebrative style of preaching had no doubt reached the depth of worshipers' souls and had "set them on fire!" The Word of God in sermon and song had spoken to the conditions of the gathered community, who could say emphatically that they had "heard a word from the Lord."

—Melva Wilson Costen[1]

If the only thing a preacher hears from a congregation week after week is how much they enjoyed the sermon, it is very likely that the preacher is not dealing with challenging content.

—Marvin McMickle[2]

"African American spirituality is a spirituality that was born and shaped in the heat of oppression and suffering." It included a tradition of Jesus that connected the dissonant strands of grief and hope in the experience of black people who trusted in God to make a way out of no way. "Blackness is the metaphor for suffering," [Prof. J. Alfred Smith] said. "To know blackness is to be connected to the suffering, hope, and purpose of black people."

—Reggie L. Williams[3]

Bryan Stevenson, the genius behind the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, has said that racism can be eradicated when we become

1. Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 65.

2. Marvin A. McMickle, *The Making of a Preacher: 5 Essentials for Ministers Today* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2018), 162.

3. Reggie L. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), ix.

proximate or close to one another. Sometimes I wonder if that, in fact, is true. How much closer can you get to a person than to engage in the sexual act that creates new life? How much closer can you get to a person than to give your child over to the Black wet nurse and have that woman's milk coursing through your child, nourishing your child, providing the antibodies that will keep your child healthy? How much closer can you get to someone who works in your home every single day? Who is on duty twenty-four hours a day? Who cooks every meal you eat, who shares your living space, who shares the air you breathe? How much closer do you have to be to be *proximate?*

The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer tested proximity. When he came to New York in 1931 on fellowship at Union Theological Seminary and affiliated with the Black Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, under the leadership of Adam Clayton Powell Sr., he found a Black Jesus who suffered with Black Americans in a White supremacist society. For Bonhoeffer, the ministers of White churches of New York lacked content in their sermons. They preached everything except of the gospel of Jesus Christ—a gospel of resistance, of survival. He found in the worship of Abyssinian a style that had a different view of society than White churches. It was a style that acknowledged the suffering of Black people in a racist society that viewed African Americans as subhuman and legitimized brutality against them in so many ways.[4] Preaching came alive and strengthened those in Abyssinian's pews to fight against a Church and society that viewed Blacks as less than human.

In Harlem, and at Abyssinian, Bonhoeffer found the Black Jesus who understood the colonized lives of African Americans as opposed to a White Christ who was used to justify Black suffering and maltreatment. He found and worshiped a Black Jesus who disrupted White supremacy; a Black Jesus who negated the White Christ who, since colonial times, had been at the foundation of racial terrorism, served as an opiate to sedate Black people to see themselves through the eyes of Whiteness as subhuman, and to accept their unjust lot in life as a condition that had been ordained by God. The White Christ inculcated racial self-loathing for Blacks. They were taught to hate everything African: African religion, African customs, African traditions. They were taught that they descended from heathens and had no history worth the time of Whites to study. Bonhoeffer found a Jesus who was the antithesis of the Christ Whites claimed to follow, but whose actions and lives told otherwise. He found a Black Jesus who turned White supremacy on its head, who

4. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*, 1, 21–23.

dispelled the notion of a White-centered world where "morality and racial identity are comingled and measured in proportion to the physical likeness to white bodies."[5] He came to understand that White Christianity was infected with and by White supremacy and a Black Jesus was a frightening disruption to Whites who were made comfortable when Black people accepted the structures of a White world.[6]

A Black Jesus, on the other hand, enabled oppressed African Americans to imagine him outside White societal structures and a Christianity that upheld White supremacy. A Black Jesus had a "this world" focus that pursued justice here and now, as opposed to an other-worldly orientation that encouraged Black people to accept their dehumanized lot on earth and look toward freedom in heaven. This focus in the here and now mandated activism in the politics of a racist society that denied Black people their share of what was God's. Under the tutelage of Adam Clayton Powell Sr., Bonhoeffer learned that the Black church was the center of the community and the people were involved in "applied Christianity," an active faith that changed the society in which African Americans found themselves. Powell knew that the Black church needed to reach beyond itself and to that end, he developed a worship environment that would help anyone, regardless of race, to understand the other and to engage in an active love with Jesus at the center.[7] Bonhoeffer studied W. E. B. Du Bois, who argued:

> The historical Jesus would be unwelcomed in a Christian society that is at home with white supremacy. In their general religious devotion, white-supremacist Christians are participants in Jesus' crucifixion because, in truth, their Christianity was not about Christ; white racists wedded Jesus to white supremacy, shaping Christian discipleship to govern a racial hierarchy.[8]

While Bonhoeffer's experience was in the 1930s, we find ourselves in a similar position today with White supremacy rearing its ugly head and the Church largely remaining silent. Bonhoeffer's learnings are relevant today and we must look to those who have left templates for us as we preach a word that upsets a Christianity that looks little like the Black Jesus Bonhoeffer found in Harlem who animated Black churches to be the Church, the body of Christ, in a world where suffering seemed to have the upper hand.

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5. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*, 25.
6. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*, 25, 54, 58–62.
7. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*, 62, 81, 90–91.
8. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*, 62.

Preaching the gospel steeped in a Black Jesus of Nazareth takes courage and there are examples to guide us. Preaching requires vulnerability—especially prophetic preaching: preaching that troubles the waters of a country, a world that seems determined to live in the sin of racism. Brené Brown defines vulnerability as *risk + uncertainty + emotional exposure*.[9] Jesus risked it all to confront the unjust powers of his day. If the body of Christ is to be his representative on earth, the Church must risk it all for the gospel, a gospel that challenges this country's original sin and the role the Church played in it. The preacher must be willing to risk upsetting the congregation, at the least, to move it from its place of comfort to a place where eliminating racism becomes its call. There will be uncertainty because it is unknown how the people will initially react and later act as a result of the sermon. Finally, the preacher must risk something of themselves to let the congregation know what is in and on their heart. The Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray said there is a certain fear when a minister attempts to preach the Word of God. That fear results from the realization that we are so small and God is so great and, regardless of the level of education, the number of years preaching, or the hours of sermon preparation, our preaching will always fall short because human beings fall short and God's judgment always looms near.[10] There is no perfect sermon.

The Rev. Florence Spearing Randolph put it all on the line and opened herself to being vulnerable when she mounted the pulpit on Sunday, February 14, 1941, at Wallace Chapel AME Zion Church in Summit, New Jersey. She was about to trouble the waters with a sermon that was so controversial for its time that it was reported in both the White and Black press. A female African American, she preached a sermon titled, "If I Were White." In a sermon that would be relevant today, but was written for her particular time, Rev. Randolph lifted a mirror to the hypocrisy of America and White people in the treatment of African Americans. She preached of the need for racial justice and economic parity that could have provided the foundation for Martin Luther King Jr.'s challenge against America's three evils—racism, capitalism, and militarism—and the need for White people to take responsibility for the mess they created.

She preached during a time of war. World War II was raging, which added additional vulnerability to her words as they could be seen as challenging, not

9. Brené Brown, "The Quest for True Belonging and Courage to Stand Alone," interview, *The IA*, September 12, 2017, *https://the1a.org/shows/2017-09-12/brene-brown-the-quest-for-true-belonging-and-the-courage-to-stand-alone*.

10. Pauli Murray, "The Gift of the Holy Spirit," in Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons*, 1850–1979 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 254.

only Christianity, but also this country's patriotism. She took a proverbial knee in the pulpit, much like Colin Kaepernick's protest against the singing of the national anthem. I can imagine this *Daughter of Thunder* skillfully opening a wound in the psyche of White Americans by declaring that if Whites "believed in Democracy as taught by Jesus [and] loved [their] country and believed . . . [the United States], because of her high type of civilization, her superior resources, her wealth and culture," then that country should be a bastion of peace and make sure all her people are cared for because "charity begins at home."[11]

From her pulpit in this supposed White church, she declared that White America needed to pull the "beam out of thine own eye" (Matt. 7:5, KJV) before finding fault with other nations. A precursor to Bryan Stevenson's call for being proximate, she called for Black and White ministers to exchange pulpits. She urged the various organizations in White churches to study Black history and realize that Black Americans had demonstrated their loyalty by dying for this country from 1776 on. But then she hit the jugular vein and said, "If I were white and believed in God, in His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible," as if being White precluded believing in all three or even one, that she would challenge all who took the pulpit to speak against all that degrades God's people: racism, prejudice, hatred, oppression, and injustice. She put the responsibility for racism squarely where it belonged, telling the White race that it should show its superiority by taking responsibility for ending racial prejudice. She used scripture to make her point: if one says they love God but not a sibling in Christ, that person was a liar (1 John 4:20). She mounted her challenge to Whites to end discrimination against Blacks in housing, education, entertainment venues, and health care. She recognized and indicted systemic racism. She confronted Whites who were ignorant of Black history and called for them to put books on Black history in the libraries and to see that Black history was taught in schools. Then, with just a hint of the task that is before her, she admitted that she did not know how successful she would be if she were White, but that her conscience would be clear. She ended with a dream in which she, as a White person, was trying to avoid a Black person who was gaining on her. Finally, the Black person stood side by side with her and her wrath was kindled. The Black person was equal to her, but then she turned to act on her wrath and was "struck dumb with fear, for lo, the Black man was not there, but Christ

11. Florence Spearing Randolph, "If I Were White," sermon, February 14, 1941, in Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 128.

stood in his place. And Oh! the pain, the pain, the pain, that looked from that dear face."[12] Would Whites act differently if Jesus were physically Black?

Randolph's sermon was daring for the time and daring for a woman because women still had a difficult time finding acceptance from men both inside and outside the Church that they had a call from God to preach. Randolph was fortunate because the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church began ordaining women in 1894. A lot was at stake for her, as a woman and as an African American to preach as she did. Race prejudice and violence were an ever-present threat. Jim Crow, segregation, and the lynchings of Blacks who did not "know their place" were never far from the minds of African Americans. It was not outside the realm of possibility that she could have been lynched. She knew she was vulnerable; she took the risk anyway.

A great preacher *brings a word* to the congregation and brings the self to the sermon. They bring scripture to life and offer a glimpse into who they are, what they believe, what they stand for, and how they have evolved. The Rev. Dr. Anna Pauline (Pauli) Murray was one such preacher. She was ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1977 at the age of sixty-seven. In 1974, she served as the crucifer at the irregular ordination of the Philadelphia Eleven, the first women *irregularly* ordained in the Episcopal Church. It was a time of change and challenge in the Episcopal Church. Women had challenged the belief that God did not call women to preach and serve at the Table in the Church. Murray was the first African American female ordained as priest in the Episcopal Church. She was used to bending the rules and norms that attempted to define the place of women and African Americans in society and the Church. Pauli Murray came to the priesthood after an illustrious career as an attorney, civil rights activist, and educator. She could have easily ignored God's call on her life, but she did not.

In five sermons preached between 1974 and 1979—"The Dilemma of the Minority Christian" (1974), "The Holy Spirit" (1977), "The Gift of the Holy Spirit (1977), "Can These Bones Live Again?" (1978), and "Salvation and Liberation" (1979)—we see an evolution of her thinking as a theologian and how she wrestled with being obedient to Jesus and being a Black Christian in a racist society and the Episcopal Church. In "Dilemma," preached three years before her ordination, she took as her text Isaiah 53:3–6, the Suffering Servant, and concluded that even in the face of racism and racial violence, the Black Christian must follow the example of Christ who went to the cross and said not "a

12. Florence Spearing Randolph, "If I Were White," sermon preached February 14, 1941, in Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 128–29.

mumblin' word." To follow Christ as he hanged from the lynching tree was difficult for Murray and she revealed that her rebelliousness and impatience tested her ability to accept Black suffering as Jesus had accepted his. She did not want to be despised because of her race (or her gender, which was fluid).

She was torn because she wanted to be a true follower, a true disciple, but questioned whether she was able to do as the Lord did. The answer was not clear and she knew it was because she questioned the meaning of salvation as it related to life in the present, to life on earth. She said that life in the here and now should involve being safe; that people should be able to live in safety, and live without fear, knowing that God's love was available to everyone, although that was not the life for African Americans. She struggled with what many Christians have always struggled: how to love those who make it difficult to love, those who treat God's Black children as less than human, and she concluded that as long as we live as we are called to do—in community—there will always be conflict. However, if we respond with conflict, we cut ourselves off from God's love and a sense of community. If we fight back with violence, we become lost and alone. She acknowledged that African Americans fought for self-respect and pride, both which had been denied by Whites, and she knew that having self-pride was a stumbling block to salvation. She questioned whether African Americans had to make a choice between having self-pride and enduring racism and injustice without saying "a mumblin' word."

She seemed to rely on redemptive suffering because she offered that "whatever we suffer is part of God's ultimate plan; that we are in fact God's Suffering Servants in the salvation history of the world."[13] Ultimately, she offered that what African Americans endured was not a struggle between White people and Black people but a struggle between good and evil.[14] Like those in our cities who face the constant fear of meeting death at the hands of a police officer, or those who are sentenced to life in substandard housing, or those who find themselves in the snares of an unjust justice system, Murray understood that there are times when we ask about the presence of evil and the seeming inability of God to handle it.

In "Can These Bones Live Again?," a sermon using the text of Ezekiel 37:1–7, Murray said she was unable to fully grasp the Holy Spirit unless she was able to relate it to her own life. In her previous sermons, the Holy Spirit was a given; however, here she pushed back, harkening to her words in *The Dilemma*

13. Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 257–62.

14. Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 257–62.

of the Minority Christian where she confessed she was rebellious and impatient. When will her people be free? she asked. She used Psalm 137 to examine what it was to be in exile, to be exiled away from everything you know. She related exile to the experiences of African Americans, stolen from their homeland and then, during the Great Migration, experiencing exile again. Babylon of the spirit is everywhere for those who try to find their roots and as they roam rootless in a country that denies their humanity and yet is home.[15] As Nikole Hannah Jones writes in the *New York Times* "The 1619 Project," African Americans are African by heritage and American by citizenship.[16] How do we keep singing, saying everything will be all right when everything around us says otherwise?

Still, she lamented, even after all she had done in her life before and after ordination, that she might die before she was able to complete God's mission in her life. How many of us share her feeling that there is just so much to do and so many more years in the rearview mirror than lie ahead? She voiced possible doom and admitted that she was an exile who was returning to the South after a fifty-year absence. Still, she continued living into her call and "out of these dry bones, the outcasts of the earth—even women—shall arise and the House of Israel shall be reborn."[17]

Murray posed a series of questions that challenges the relevancy of the Church. These questions lead us back to Kelly Brown Douglas when she asks whether the Church is going to be White or is it going to be Church?[18] A White Church forces everyone who is not White to attempt to be something they can never be—White, which causes trauma and self-loathing. Murray wanted to know if the Church is strong enough, courageous enough to challenge the "powers and principalities," the systemic evils that destroy humanity and seem to be "virtually immune to individual morality."[19] She offered that the Church had become too ingrained in maintaining the status quo to be a force for change; the Church had been coopted and corrupted by a false world that competed with God's creation. She extolled the virtues and writings of liberation theologists, among them Gustavo Gutierrez. The civil rights activist and the theologian in her united as she argued for a life of freedom "*here* and

15. Pauli Murray, "Can These Bones Live Again," in Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 272.

16. Nikole Hannah Jones, "The 1619 Project," *New York Times Magazine*, August 18, 2019, 26.

17. Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 276.

18. Kelly Brown Douglas, "The Work Our Soul Must Do" (keynote speech, Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, Diocesan Convention, November 15, 2019), *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLTDDFSxMVA&t=1774s*.

19. Pauli Murray, "Salvation and Liberation," in Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 264.

now."[20] Sin was corporate as well as individual; the Church could not ignore corporate sin and focus solely on individual or private sin. She quoted the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in that for the church "to accept passively an evil system [is] as immoral as active perpetuation of it, [and] . . . a righteous person has no alternative but to refuse to cooperate with an evil system."[21] It was time to fight back and no longer accept things as they were. It was time to throw off the negative stereotypes and beliefs of African Americans that dominated White society and call out the Church that fed into that system. Finally, she said, what was needed was a "redefinition of the task of the Church in the world."[22] The Church, rather than hiding in its piety, was called to take a stand and lead the world in throwing off the powers that sought to negate God's African American children. The Church had to live into being the body of Christ, the Christ who challenged unjust powers.

Both Murray and Randolph preached dangerous sermons, although we don't know if either would have classified their sermons as such. Preaching can calm or excite; it can arouse or convict. Preaching can fill the hearer or leave the hearer empty. There is a purpose for preaching and Frank Thomas says that the purpose of preaching, particularly in the African American tradition, is to offer the hearer an assurance of God's grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That whatever the person may be going through, whatever is occurring in that person's life, God lifts up, strengthens, and encourages the hearer. God, in some cases, walks with that person "through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23, KJV). A good sermon can be the moral compass needed for a congregation or for society at large to repent of the evils that infect them. It can point the way to a way of life that God wants for God's people. A sermon is to always offer hope, even in the midst of despair.[23]

Regardless of the skill of the preacher, regardless of race of the preacher or congregation, there ought to be times at the end of a sermon that deals with a difficult topic that the minister is not greeted with kudos. Depending on the nature of the sermon, people might even get up and walk out because the sermon has hit a nerve or is deemed too political. Other times, the worshiper does not want to face the truth, particularly as it relates to racial oppression. Preaching against racism, lifting up #BlackLivesMatter is bound to cause some

20. Pauli Murray, "Salvation and Liberation," in Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 266–67.

21. Pauli Murray, "Salvation and Liberation," in Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 267.

22. Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder*, 269.

23. Frank Thomas, "The Nature and Purpose of Preaching," July 4, 2016, *https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=11&v=Qi22PK3DA4Y&feature=emb_title*.

heartburn. According to Marvin McMickle, "preachers are made when they experience some negative reactions to what they have said but find the courage to keep saying what the Lord has laid on their heart."[24] Preaching #BlackLivesMatter can make witnesses for the Lord because the preacher has seen something in society that needs to be corrected, something that needs to be changed and has the courage to proclaim it from the pulpit. These preachers decided not to run from the truth; rather, a decision has been made to turn and face the truth head on and make a statement that can change the lives of those in their pews[25] and their community. Both Murray and Randolph faced that challenge head-on. There was the need to be vulnerable and to take a risk.

Preaching is a vital part of the worship experience. Worship is not an escape from the world; however, for many African Americans, whether in the traditional Black church or the Euro-American (White) church, it is through the worship experience that Black Christians are able to either hear about or create a world in which they are valued—one where they are able to live into God's love for all God's people. Through the worship experience, and particularly, the preached word, African Americans hear and experience the way life should be on this earth; a life that is in congruence with God's will for creation. It is through their understanding of God that they are able to live into their trust in a God who, in all too many cases, has been depicted as White and merely tolerant of those who, it was once claimed, did not descend from Adam,[26] and were unworthy of salvation—at least White salvation. As Frederick Hilborn Talbot writes, "It is through preaching that Black people are given hope as they struggle against oppression in society; as they gather to hear that God is incarnational and is present in their struggles; that God loves them, and shares in their common life and pain."[27]

Annie Woodley Brown offers that the Christian Church has been and continues to be caught between the *knowledge of good and evil* as opposed to being the countercultural voice against evil. Rather than being the face of God where all are valued and everyone is loved as one's neighbor, the Church has fallen prey to the secular world's embrace of racism.[28] Not only has it embraced the

24. McMickle, *Making of a Preacher*, 162.

25. McMickle, *Making of a Preacher*, 163.

26. Frederick Hilborn Talbot, *African American Worship: New Eyes for Seeing* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 67.

27. Talbot, *African American Worship*, 67.

28. Annie Woodley Brown, "Racism and the Christian Church in America: Caught between the Knowledge of Good and Evil," *Social Work in Public Health* 34, issue 1 (March 2019), *https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19371918.2019.1566111*.

sin of racism, the Church was at the taproot of racism in this country and that sin needs to be called out in preaching. There is a saying in the Black church that if it isn't preached from the pulpit, it isn't important.

The manure of racism fertilizes the ground in which "God's gonna trouble the waters" to experience a different way of viewing the world into which the incarnate Jesus was born; a world in which Jesus came to turn it right side up; a world in which God's people recognize that racism is the antithesis to God's creation. It is into this world that the preacher steps, who after having already prepared a sermon, sometimes has to tear it up, and begin anew. Another unarmed Black man or woman has been shot to death by a police officer. Or perhaps, the waters need to be troubled because White supremacists have burned yet another Black church. Or, another Black man has been freed from prison because of new DNA evidence that proved innocence. Or, Black children have been suspended from school because their natural hair does not conform to white standards. Or, perhaps the preacher is just tired of seeing Black bodies used as fodder for the criminal justice system or corralled in ghettos created by unjust housing and economic policies. The list can go on and on. Preaching is soul work, and preaching racial justice challenges even the best of preachers. Preaching, according to Frank Thomas, is "terrible and dangerous. It is terrible because if we do our job well, preaching troubles and shakes the foundations of the world. True preaching dares to speak truth to powerful forces that have their own 'alternative facts' and do not want to be challenged."[29]

Preaching is difficult, particularly in times when the Church and the country are polarized. The preacher can be the most polished, the most charismatic, the most dynamic, and still, preaching can cause butterflies, cause angst. Preaching about race is traumatic, teaching about race is traumatic, even with the help of the Holy Spirit. It is traumatic because it is difficult to determine how the sermon will be accepted, if the sermon will be accepted, and whether or not the sermon will move the hearers to *do something.* Crafting a prophetic sermon that speaks to both those who are in positions to change the status of the marginalized and those who are marginalized takes skill.[30] Regardless of whether or not the race of the preacher and those in the pews *match*, what for some is viewed as politics can either bring the congregation together or tear it apart. However, womanist theologian Katie Geneva Cannon reminds us that "preaching is a

29. Frank A. Thomas, *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018), xii.

30. Phil Snider, ed., *Preaching Resistance: Voices of Hope, Justice and Solidarity* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2018), 1.

divine activity" and when we look at race and racism, that divine activity calls for the Word of God "to be proclaimed or announced on a contemporary issue with an ultimate response to our God."[31] There is a proviso when preaching a word that disrupts, when preaching becomes dangerous: it "risks challenging those in power,"[32] and when that happens, be prepared for the preacher to be approached about preaching politics. Yet, preaching *done right* has the power to free the oppressed from the constraints of a racist society and renew hope in what could be. Preaching *done right* has the power to transform those who hear the word proclaimed if only temporarily.[33]

Preaching has the power to be a corrective, says W. Scott Haldeman:

> [Preaching] provides Christians with an opportunity to leave behind—for momentary and fragile periods—the structures of inequality and violence that pervade our lives and to imagine—and, even more, to experience—an alternative mode of being, a place and time where justice and peace are known, where a communion of love is tasted, ingested and so . . . embodied. . . . [T]o invoke poet warrior Audre Lorde, [preaching] makes us dissatisfied with anything less in our everyday lives.[34]

What is it like to preach Black Lives (Matter) if the preacher is White and the congregation is Black or the reverse? Is preaching racial justice easier if the preacher's race and the congregation's race are the same? Would there be a need to preach Black Lives Matter if, for example, the congregation and preacher are both Asian? What if the congregation and preacher look the same but are culturally different? If the preacher and congregation are White, is there a risk to the preacher when preaching about the racial issues that plague this country today? What is gained? What could be lost? Who would care?

One of the issues facing the Church today is how to attract and keep young people. While providing insight into African American millennials, Frank Thomas,[35] the creator of the first and only PhD program in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric in the country, offers that the Church must

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31. Katie Geneva Cannon, *Teaching Preaching: Isaac Rufus Clark and Black Sacred Rhetoric* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 53.

32. Thomas, *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*, xv.

33. Costen, *African American Christian Worship*, 67–68.

34. W. Scott Haldeman, Chicago Theological Seminary, *https://www.ctschicago.edu/people/w-scott-haldeman/*.

35. The Rev. Dr. Frank A. Thomas teaches and is the director of the PhD program in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana.

be relevant to this group to keep their attention. Young people are concerned with the "emergence of mass social movements. If the church does not address race . . . or is not thoughtful or skilled in addressing [this] issue, Millennials will consider church not relevant to their needs and struggles."[36] For all too many African Americans, the ability to survive a police encounter is top on their list of priorities. Black Millennials, in particular, go to church with the expectation that they will hear a word that encourages them to believe in the ideals of this country that lift up life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.[37] If Church does not engage the issues that affect young people's lives, we will continue to see them disconnect. Further, while people of color comprise only one-third of US millennials, the fact is that they comprise over one-half of Christians who are millennials and while they love the Jesus of the oppressed, rarely do they hear from the pulpit anything close to becoming active in the fight for justice.[38]

To preach boldly requires that one break from what is the norm of preaching in many churches: preaching sermons that are laced with a condemnation of homosexuality, that lift up heteronormative male leadership, and focus on Jesus as a "life coach who will make you healthy, wealthy, and wise."[39] Katie Cannon counsels that too much of contemporary preaching is shallow when it comes to dealing with the issues that vex American society and does little to help people deal with those issues that affect their daily lives.[40] Preaching the truth of the gospel story is difficult; however, it must be done. If the Church is not a leader, if not *the* leader, in transforming society into what it can be, then who or what organization can be called to the challenge? Preaching that challenges the status quo and provides the hearer with concrete ways of changing the world encourages resistance to the forces that negate the mission of Jesus and the *imago Dei* in God's people. Preaching boldly recognizes that preaching is not about the preacher, rather it is about God and being used by God for something greater than ourselves.[41]

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36. Frank A. Thomas, *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2016), 9.

37. Khalil Gibran Muhammad, "The Revolution Will Be Live-Tweeted: Why #BlackLivesMatter Is the New Model for Civil Rights," *The Guardian*, December 1, 2014, *https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/01/black-lives-matter-civil-rights-movement-ferguson*.

38. Alan Bean, "Why (White) Millennials Are Leaving the Church," Friends of Justice (blog), December 20, 2014, *https://friendsofjustice.wordpress.com/2014/12/20/why-white-millennials-are-leaving-the-church*.

39. Thomas, *Practice of African American Preaching*, 146.

40. Cannon, *Teaching Preaching*, 57.

41. Thomas, *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*, xv.

Preaching resistance helps to free those who wittingly and unwittingly collude with the dominant powers and helps them to repent—to change their hearts and minds and go in another direction toward freedom. Resistance preaching provides a way toward liberation from oppressive powers and enables the hearer to walk in the shoes of the oppressed.[42] Still, one of the issues that must be considered when preaching dangerous sermons is fear. People in our pews fear change. They fear the unknown. They fear conflict. They fear loss of control, power, and/or privilege. Church is where many come to escape the problems of the world and it is not unusual to hear, "I don't want to hear that stuff. I come to be comforted." The preacher cannot be swayed by those fears. There is a need to be pastoral, but ignoring what is going on in the world will not make racial injustice go away.

There is also fear on the part of the preacher. Fear of causing conflict or dividing the congregation. There is also fear that if enough people are upset, the preacher could lose the position and be without the means to care for self and family. There is also the fear that the preacher, who has spent time building up good will in the congregation, might be faced with being disliked. There is also the fear that the preacher, even after giving one's best, will not make a difference.[43] But, preach we must.

On the pages that follow are sermons that are borne out of what Walter Bruggemann calls the theology of anger that "cries out in God's name that things cannot continue as they are."[44] Preaching liberty and freedom is not for the faint of heart; however, those who do are being faithful to the gospel of Jesus, with all its risks, with all its headaches, with all its vulnerability. Preaching resistance shows that Christ's love is stronger than any force and all the princes and principalities that seem to have a toehold in today's society. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, preaching the gospel of Jesus has the power to change lives and the world as we know it. The preachers on the following pages, both lay and ordained, call us to a prophetic imagination that goes beyond the status quo and enables us to see new and yet undiscovered options for God's people.[45] Prophetic preaching borne of moral imagination propels the preacher to reveal to those with ears to hear to "public expressions of those very hopes and yearnings

42. Snider, *Preaching Resistance*, 5.

43. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2010), 11–20.

44. Walter Bruggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 65.

45. Thomas, *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*, xv.

that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply."[46] The moral imagination that explodes on these pages has "the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist."[47]

Racial justice will not occur on its own. We cannot close our eyes and wish racism away. We cannot even pray it away. We can pray for strength to eradicate it. We can pray that White people have a change of heart and we can pray that Black people will love themselves as God has created them to be. Prayer must be coupled with action. Human beings have created this system of dehumanization and injustice and it will take human beings to dismantle it and create a world that reflects what God wants for all of God's people. Let us continue the work of others who came before us, and preach a word that disturbs, disrupts the status quo, yet heals. These words have been preached; these words are to be preached and the hope is that the words are heard and that action has been or will be taken on the words that have been spoken; that *shema* will rule the day, a kind of hearing that results in action. Will preachers preach a prophetic and troubling word and will preaching stir the hearts of those who hear?

46. Bruggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*, 65.

47. John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 29.