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Name
AMERICA’S ORIGINAL SIN

A Call for the Boycott of The Word Network

E. BERNARD JORDAN
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INTRODUCTION

AMERICA’S ORIGINAL SIN: A CALL FOR THE BOYCOTT OF THE WORD NETWORK

“‘I’m going to tell it like it is. I hope you can take it like it is.’” -Malcolm X

Racism in America is still alive and wreaking havoc in the lives of Black people, who have suffered oppression at the hands of white people for centuries. Today, in 2019, Black people are still not given the full respect and recognition that they deserve as first, human beings, and second, citizens of this great nation.

As a leader and Bishop in the Lord’s Church and a prophetic voice to the nations, I cannot sit idly by and watch our people continue to suffer in the background of life, while white people in this nation continue to perpetuate the negative stereotypes and misconceptions regarding our Black men, women and children, refuse to offer opportunities for financial prosperity and upward mobility in the workplace, and are slack in rendering to our people, especially our Black men, the respect and dignity that they deserve.

The Church at large, one of the most influential and strongest voices in our communities, must stand for justice and domestic tranquility in our world. The Constitution of the United States of America says, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form
a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” Yet still to this day, in 2019, as we quickly approach 2020, Black people are suffering injustice in our educational systems, our workplaces, our homes, and in our communities. The general welfare of Black people does not appear to be a main focal point in our government, in corporate America, in the courtroom, in the boardroom and in the classroom.

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**About eight-in-ten blacks say Americans haven’t gone far enough in giving blacks equal rights with whites**

% of each group saying that, when it comes to giving black people equal rights with whites, our country has ...

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**Among whites**

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Note: Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown. Whites and blacks include those who report being only one race and are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. This question was asked of a random half of the sample; estimates for Asians are included in the total but are not shown separately due to small sample size.


Pew Research Center

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**Figure 1 Equal Rights for blacks and whites**

Black people are still suffering disenfranchisement at the hands of white people. Black people are still suffering lower pay at the hands
of leaders of corporations. Black people are still being disrespected in our communities at the hands of white police officers and city and government officials. Black people are still suffering disrespect, fewer rights and lopsided verdicts at the hands of our legal system. Our Black youth are still not given equal opportunity to educational resources as their white counterparts.

When is this going to stop? But how can this stop if the leaders of one of the largest and most influential institutions in the world, the Church, do not take a stand for justice, equality, fair and humane treatment and basic respect for Black men, women and children of this nation.

According to a Pew Research Center 2019 report:

Majorities of whites, blacks and Hispanics say race relations are bad, and many say they’re getting worse. Over half of U.S. adults (58%) say race relations are generally bad, and while this share is highest among blacks, majorities of whites and Hispanics also say this. Overall, 53% of the public says race relations are getting worse, while 17% say they are getting better and 30% say they’re staying the same. Those who say race relations are generally bad are particularly pessimistic – 69% of that group says race relations are getting worse, compared with 30% of those who say race relations are generally good.

Leaders of the Church must stand and address this and other issues that are causing the great divide in this country. The Church must be the prophetic voice in our communities and in the world at large to speak to the injustices that are systemic in our culture and society. The Church cannot sit idly by and allow the government or the entertainment industry or any other industry or institution to be the prophetic voice for our people.
We must take a long, hard look in the mirror and realize that “we are our brother’s keeper.” We are the ones who God has given the license to speak prophetically to our communities the truth of who God has created us to be, what God has created us to do and everything God has commissioned us to have. We can no longer sit by and allow people of other races to dictate our future, especially those who do not have the best interest in mind for our sons and daughters.

“If you’re not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.” ~Malcolm X

For centuries, Black leaders have fought for our freedom, and still today, we are fighting the same battle. Some white people still turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to the greatness that exists within our people. But how can we transform the minds of other races, when we do not have a strong self-concept ourselves? How can we convince others to respect us when we can’t stand together as one against the injustices that we see and experience every day? How can we change the antiquated mindset of white people, whose thoughts are steeped in racism, slavery, disenfranchisement, inequality, and disrespect for Black people, when we can’t stand together for a cause until justice is done, not just a few of us, but all of us standing as one?

The Pew Research Center 2019 report also notes:

*Most Americans believe slavery continues to have an impact on black people’s status.* About six-in-ten say the legacy of slavery affects the position of black people in American society today either a great deal (31%) or a fair amount (32%), while 19% say it doesn’t affect their position much and 16% say it has no effect today. Blacks are far more
likely than those of other races or ethnicities to say slavery has a great deal of an effect on black people’s status today – 59% say this, compared with 26% of whites, 29% of Hispanics and 33% of Asians. (Emphasis added)

Our people deserve better. When one hurts, we all hurt. When one is disrespected, we are all disrespected. When one is oppressed, we are all oppressed. When one is killed at the hands of racism, our entire race suffers. We are our brother’s and our sister’s keeper. As a matter of fact, we are our brother and our sister. For this reason, we need to take a stand against the establishment that refuses to acknowledge and respect Black people for who we are and our contributions to this nation. We must stand together as one and refuse to allow Kevin Adell, CEO of The Word Network, or anyone else to disrespect who we are as a people by making snide and insensitive comments and jokes without regard for who is in the room, especially not a Bishop in the Lord’s Church.

**ACCORDING TO THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER REPORT FROM APRIL OF 2019**…

“A plurality of Americans (45%) say the country hasn’t gone far enough in giving black people equal rights with whites, while 39% say it’s been about right and 15% say we’ve gone too far. Black adults are by far the most likely to say the country hasn’t gone far enough – 78% say this, compared with 37% of whites and 48% of Hispanics. Among whites, there is a vast party divide on this issue. While 64% of white Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say the country hasn’t gone far enough in giving blacks equal rights with whites, only 15% of Republicans and Republican leaders say the same. About a third of white Republicans (31%) say the country has gone too far, compared with 5% of white Democrats.”
CHAPTER 1

TAKING A STAND AGAINST OPPRESSORS IN PRESENT-DAY AMERICA

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7 ESV
BOYCOTT THE WORD NETWORK

The Word Network needs to be taken off every cable network’s channel selection. More than a hundred church leaders from Black churches across the country are calling for the boycott of The Word Network after the actions of Kevin Adell, the owner and CEO, proved to be racist. The white CEO of this network, billed as “the largest African-American religious network in the world,” made a racially discriminating joke through a photoshopped image of himself dressed as a pimp, surrounded by prominent Black clergy, whom he refers to as “hoes.” He sent this image via text message to different staff members, the majority of whom are Black.

Bishop George Bloomer, long-time televangelist and founder of the Bethel Family Worship Center, is the whistleblower for Adell’s derogatory act. Bishop Bloomer was also one of the recipients of the said image via text. Bishop Bloomer expressed his disapproval of the offensive photo, saying, “This is not funny. This is not good. That pimp talk and hoe talk has racist connotations for Black people.” Instead of realizing the error in his message, the CEO of this religious network texted Bishop Bloomer a response saying, it’s funny and he should get over it.

Instead of realizing the error in his message, the CEO of this religious network texted Bishop Bloomer a response saying, it’s funny and he should get over it.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 1

His voice ignored, Bishop Bloomer went to both Adell and his assistant in person and told them, “Don’t ever tweet that. You should get rid of it. This is not funny. Don’t play with this and
don’t play with it with me.” Again, rejecting the second opportunity to apologize for the insulting image, the president of The Word Network allegedly photoshopped a picture of Bishop Bloomer in a white tuxedo into the image and added text underneath it that said: “The show last night was good, Tattoo.” Tattoo is the dwarf from the TV show, *Fantasy Island*, who ran around calling Mr. Roarke, “Boss.”

The CEO of The Word Network alluded to Bishop Bloomer being his “Tattoo” and him being the “Boss.” Despite the fact that Mr. Roarke on Fantasy Island isn’t really a villain, the term “boss” in the Black community conveys a deprecating term “Massa”, which Adell was suggesting. Thus, Adell was implying he was the “Massa” of The Word Network.

Bishop Bloomer gave the president of the predominantly African-American religious network a warning about the deprecating jokes, “This is not good. I don’t know what you’re doing but stop playing.” Instead, the CEO of the network shrugged off his concerns, saying, “Oh, you’re too sensitive.” In the end, Bishop Bloomer could not take the cultural insensitivity and belittling nature of the network’s owner. The disagreement with the image ended with Bishop Bloomer’s choice to leave the network.

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**The petition started because the Black community cannot — and should not — allow a media mogul to think he has the right to do this to anyone.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 2*

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The petition to boycott The Word Network started because the Black community cannot — and should not — allow a media mogul to think he has the right to do this to anyone. According to this petition, even though Adell as CEO of The Word Network,
profited from the Black community, he does not have regard for Black humanity. The petition reached 3,000 signatures in just six days. The protesting preachers include me and my wife, representing Zoe Ministries; Pastor Larry Reid, Larry Reid Live; Vickie Yohe, Christian recording artist; Paul Crouch Jr., Impact Network; Lisa Sharon Harper, Freedom Roads; the Rev. Anita Faye-Wilson; Apostle Travis Wright; the Rev. Yolanda Brown, Center of Destiny Ministries; and the Rev. Peter Heltzel.

When you see racial violence and discrimination across the country, the African-American clergy and allies of the African-American community must not choose to be silent in the face of palpable racism. African-Americans have endured 400 years of slavery and prejudice in this country. To see this kind of behavior and disrespect from a white leader of a mass media company and not do anything about it, simply promotes the behavior.

Bishop Bloomer initiated a conversation with the president of the network, and expressed how this was not appropriate, but he was ridiculed further. This childish behavior from a CEO of a company must not be tolerated, because, first of all, Adell is not a child. He is a grown man, who ignored the dignity of the African-American community, despite the fact that the majority of the people he is leading are Blacks. The petition is from the CEO and president of The Word Network to publicly apologize to Bishop Bloomer and the members of the African-American community for his discriminatory
and derogatory behavior and for cable companies to drop The Word Network from their packages.

**OPPRESSION IN THE PRESENT-DAY AMERICA**

In the distressing increase of racial discrimination-related crimes today, the role of the church in the African-American community must be reconsidered and evaluated. Throughout history, the Black Church has been a steady present in the Black community. Where is the Black Church now when it comes to racist attacks, whether it is to the physical welfare or the dignity of the African-American community?

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Where is the Black Church now when it comes to racist attacks, whether it is to the physical welfare or the dignity of the African-American community?

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 4*

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Data shows the continued rise of hate crimes in the country for five consecutive years since 2014. In 2014, there was a visible decrease in bigotry-tagged violence, but the numbers quickly escalated since then, with the increase felt more in the largest cities in the country, specifically in New York, California, Florida, and Illinois. According to Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, there is an “increasing mainstream acceptance of hate speech and online hate. Words have consequences.” It is in this light that I reiterate this call for a boycott against The Word Network because of what its president and CEO has done and because of his unrepentant attitude to requests for a public apology.
BE A “PETER”

The book of Acts is filled with many different transformations of the early believers in their journey of spreading the gospel, after the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven. It is because of the contribution of the Early Church saints that we have Christianity today, centuries after the death of Christ. The leaders of a generation create a new future not only for its generation but for future ones.

Simon, who became Peter, was an ordinary fisherman before he met Jesus (Mt. 4:18). Jesus called him, and he followed him. He became one of his closest disciples. He was not the most qualified person to be an apostle of the Lord, but he took a stand. Even after his sin of denying Jesus three times after Jesus was arrested, Peter did not remain a coward. He became one of the most courageous leaders of faith.

**Peter became a leader of his generation, not because of position or promotion.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 5*

In the physical absence of Jesus, Peter took a stand. Peter became a leader of his generation, not because of position or promotion. It was because he identified himself as the cause of the matter for his generation. He saw that he was something to contribute to the cause of Christianity. Despite his sins and his lack of qualifications, he did what he could do.

**YOU ARE A CONTRIBUTION**

Today, we must take a stand and see ourselves as a contribution, not just to the dignity of African-Americans everywhere but to the justice system in America. We can all be “Peters.” We can consider ourselves contributors to the world we live in. We do not have to wait
for someone to point at us and direct us to take charge; we ourselves must initiate it.

Dr. King said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 6

To be a “Peter” is to take accountability for our actions. Dr. King said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” As leaders in our churches and our communities, how can we remain silent against the disrespect and discrimination propagated by Adell? We must not remain victims. As a contributor to this world, we make our choices. We keep ourselves fully and wholly responsible for every choice.

YOU ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR RESPONSE

You may not be accountable for the actions of others. You may not have any role in the history of African-American slavery in the country. You also cannot be held responsible for the ignorance and bigotry of other people. But there is something you are accountable for, and it is how you respond to racism. You get to choose if you would accept this kind of behavior and just “get over it” or if you make your voice heard.

Dr. King said, “Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor. It must be demanded by the oppressed.”

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 7
Dr. King said, “Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor. It must be demanded by the oppressed.” Actions from rich, powerful, white men, such as that of Adell, show there is still a culture of oppression in the country. It is alive, and it can exist even in a company whose staff members are African-American. If there is still oppression, then there is still a fight. The fight for freedom and human dignity is ongoing, and it would depend on the oppressed to keep fighting.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

Without a renewing of the mind, our actions and perspective would remain like that of slaves. Having said that, as free human beings with dignity and pride, we cannot allow other people to put us through any indignities. Adell racially attacked and offended members of the African-American clergy — leaders of our church. Saying and doing nothing about it is the same as “getting over it.”

The same way that Satan would not let the sinner go, the sinner needs to change his mind. He must be fully convinced of his redemption. As members of the African-American clergy and community, we must be fully convinced of our value and worth. We must be fully convinced of our identity in the Lord. We must be fully convinced that we are free; we are no longer slaves in this country. As free human beings, we must not allow oppressors to treat us as if we are still oppressed.

Like Peter, we must not sit silently. We must initiate and take part in this call against the leader of The Word Network. Do not live your life as a spectator to abuse and racism. Stand up and be a cause or a contributor of something great for this generation and the generations to come. If a television executive thinks he can do
something like this without consequence, then what has changed for the country?

The CEO of the largest African-American network refused to apologize for a racially offensive photo, referring to himself as a pimp and the African-American preachers in his network as his “hoes.”

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 8

The CEO of the largest African-American network refused to apologize for a racially offensive photo, referring to himself as a pimp and the African-American preachers in his network as his “hoes.” Whether it is in the movies, books, TV, or in real life, pimps are known to be dishonorable characters that use their “hoes” as vehicles of seduction. Hoes are trafficked and make money for their pimp.

The pimp is also known to be someone who applies force, manipulation, and coercion upon their hoes so that they can profit in the end. Hoes are either ignorant, have limited options and/or are desperate. They also offer their bodies, dignity and skills in order to get paid. This picture depicts what Adell thinks of the preachers in his network and of the African-American community in general.

Simply doing nothing about it, being victims of circumstance, propagates Adell’s behavior. Adell wanted Bishop Bloomer to simply “get over it.” No half-meant apologies were offered. He simply wanted Bishop Bloomer to laugh at the racially inappropriate joke with him. If Bishop Bloomer and the rest of the Black clergy and community do this, if they “get over it” and not take this matter seriously, what does that say about the dignity of Black humanity?
The network executive said that the Detroit NABJ's calls for boycott, apology, diversity training and plan to avoid a similar incident was defaming him.

*America's Original Sin Principle No. 9*

In fact, the Detroit Chapter of the Nation Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) condemned this photo and called the image “repulsive” and referred to how it “denigrates community leaders.” Almost similar to his response to Bishop Bloomer, with regard to his ability to see the seriousness of his actions, the unremorseful network owner threatened the NABJ with a lawsuit. The network executive said that the Detroit NABJ’s calls for boycott, apology, diversity training and plan to avoid a similar incident was defaming him.

It is this network president’s oblivion for his racist behavior that makes the situation more repulsive. The fact that he sees absolutely nothing wrong with the photos he had sent out and his response to people’s correction and rebuke, shows his heart. He sees this is normal — in fact, he thought it was funny.

*It is this network president's oblivion for his racist behavior that makes the situation more repulsive.*

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 10*

According to a Detroit-based minister who spoke with EEW Magazine, “Racism, when it rears its head in subtle and blatant forms, stems from a superiority complex on the part of the oppressor. This man Kevin Adell appears to be the worst kind of racist—the one who builds a fortune on the backs of Black people while refusing
to show them respect or dignity or even acknowledge their pain. It’s exactly what was done in the American slave system.”

THE SILENCE OF THE COMMUNITY

Think about it. Do you think it is the current silence of the African-American community — keeping one’s heads down — throughout different hate crimes and racially-segregated police violence and injustices that is keeping the abuse alive? Dr. King was on to something when he said, “A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”

Dr. King was on to something when he said, “A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 11

Once members of our community begin to take a stand against our oppressors, then the oppression would cease. Leaders of the African-American Church must not keep their heads down and let this pass. They must take a stand for the dignity and value of the African-American preachers who were the object of ridicule of The Word Network’s CEO.

Together, we can make a difference for the country today, not only for our generation, but for generations to come. On the other hand, the silence of the community signs on to the oppression of the people for our children’s children, and beyond.
CHAPTER 2

A CALL FOR UNITY IS A CALL FOR BROTHERHOOD IN THE FAITH

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2 ESV

IS THERE REALLY A SENSE OF COMMUNITY?

Charles Marsh wrote in his book, The Beloved Community, “Although a boycott was necessary in Montgomery to bring an end to discriminatory laws, King urged the church people in movement to keep in mind that a boycott and its achievements do not in themselves represent the goal.” In the last days of the historic Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dr. King said the goal was reconciliation, redemption, and the creation of a beloved community. For him,
the pursuit of civil rights for African-Americans was significantly a spiritual journey. He also saw this as an opportunity to unite the nation after years of division from oppression and hatred.

We are in a season where we must take a stand for African-Americans as a people of the United States. In order to be truly united as a nation, we are calling for the boycott of The Word Network because it promotes a culture that tolerates bigotry and racism. The toleration of such discriminatory mindsets and behavior only separates Blacks from Whites. Unless people — Black AND White — take a stand and say, “No, this is not right. The CEO and president did an offensive and discriminatory thing,” how can there be true unity in the country? When people “get over” a mass media mogul calling himself a pimp with Black preachers as his “hoes” and look the other way, what does it say for us as a nation?

The toleration of such discriminatory mindsets and behavior only separates the Blacks from the whites.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 12

HOW WOULD YOU TREAT YOUR BROTHER?

Dr. King once said, “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.” Would a White brother refer to his brother as a hoe or belittle him to the point of saying he is just a “Tattoo,” and how he is the pimp and the boss? Even after Bishop Bloomer pointed out how Adell was being offensive, the latter saw it as being too sensitive. If your White boss is calling you a hoe, expecting it to be funny, where should we draw the line then?

Dr. King’s prophetic fight for justice was with the weapons of the Holy Spirit, which is with the weapon of love. Loving our brother
means standing up against oppression and hate. Being called a “hoe” is a hateful act. It is by no means affectionate or playful; anyone who says otherwise needs to seriously reconsider their self-image. Dr. King heard a voice when he was praying, “Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo, I will be with you. Even until the end of the world.”

Similarly, we must stand up for justice and for truth. If we accept what this CEO has done and simply move on, then we are saying it is tolerable. Our truth must not be defined by the actions of such racists. We must take a stand for our own truth and dignity according to what Jesus has done for us on the cross. As Christians, we are not anyone’s hoes and slaves. We are free human beings who must be treated with dignity and respect.

Whether you are African-American or not, you must stand for your fellow believers.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 13

The call for a boycott of The Word Network is a stand for brotherhood. Bishop Bloomer and all the other preachers whom Adell referred to as his hoes, are our brothers. Whether you are African-American or not, you must stand for your fellow believers. If you see someone who is treating your brother in such an undignified manner, you take a stand against it and you defend your brother.

ALWAYS THE GUILTY PARTY

There have been so many heartbreaking incidents in America in the context of racial inequality. There is a need to take a stand today, because who else will take a stand for our brothers? Coming from the unbelievable verdict for the killer of Trayvon Martin, when are we going to say, “Enough!”? Given it is not in the same
block in terms of the gravity of the crime, but it does come from the same mentality. It comes from the same culture of bigotry. It comes from the same mindset that believes Blacks can be treated as inferior human beings. They can be portrayed as such and they can be treated as such. The president of The Word Network has this mindset and he does not even apologize for it. In fact, he sees absolutely nothing wrong about it.

Pulling The Word Network from every cable network is a message to the rest of society. It says, “Black Lives Matter.” If we believe “All Lives Matter,” then Black lives matter. If we allow people like Adell to paint an offensive picture of our fellow brothers, no matter how humorous the intent was, then we are saying Black people matter less. That was the punchline of the joke, wasn’t it? You take the word “hoe” and put it in any other context. Whether in the context of White or Black people, “hoe” is still a deprecating label.

As an African-American community, we cannot let Black preachers be the butt of jokes, especially when the joke disrespects and steps on the long history of slavery and abuse of Black people. Where is the pride and the dignity of people who are saying this is okay? It is an insult for people to say, “lighten up, it’s just a joke” when the reason why it is funny to them is because they think so little of you.

**THE WHITE BODY IS SUPERIOR AND INNOCENT**

During a time when Black victims are dying at the hands of White perpetrators due to racial discrimination and discriminatory mindsets,
these jokes must be the last thing anyone can consider funny.

America's Original Sin Principle No. 14

During a time when Black victims are dying at the hands of white perpetrators due to racial discrimination and discriminatory mindsets, these jokes must be the last thing anyone can consider funny. We are living at a time when white killers get away with murdering Black victims. If you think about it, Adell is no different. He is a white man who thinks he has every right to get away with degrading members of his staff with distasteful jokes.

If we analyze such recent cases, if it was a white victim and a Black killer, then the Black killer would almost instantaneously be found guilty. In the case of Trayvon’s death, it was the victim who was blamed for his death, and the killer would have the benefit of layers of reasonable doubt. Kerry Brown Douglas, author of the book Stand Your Ground, said, “The free body is perceived as an inferior, guilty Black body that must be prevented from encroaching upon the space of cherished white property” and “Constructed in opposition to the Black body, the white body is perceived as a superior, innocent body.”

The Black body has always been viewed to be inferior and guilty. It is “too sensitive” when it was called a “hoe.”

America's Original Sin Principle No. 15

If you are joining this discussion, then you must think long and hard about the difference between the white body and the Black body. The white body is superior and innocent, despite calling people “hoes.” On the other hand, the Black body has always been
viewed to be inferior and guilty. It is “too sensitive” when it was called a “hoe.” It is heartbreaking to be viewed from such a light. Douglas wrote:

“Black victims of fatal violence are presumed guilty of bringing their deaths upon themselves. Their white killers are given the benefit of the doubt. It is readily assumed that the white killer “acted as a reasonable person who is in fear of his life.”

Adell didn’t physically murder Bishop Bloomer and the other African-American preachers when he spread a photoshopped image to look as if he was their pimps, and they were his hoes. But he took a stab at their dignity. Were Bishop Bloomer and the other Black preachers at fault? Did they simply make a big deal about this? Are they not worth the attention and respect for people to boycott The Word Network and for cable companies to take this channel out of their cable offerings? In reality, Adell was not forced to send this photo. He did it intentionally to poke fun at these preachers. He was speaking his mind, and he was speaking about how little he thought of his staff.

Adell was going to sue them — as if he were the true victim — for defaming him.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 16

The Detroit Chapter of the Nation Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) called for a public apology and some cultural sensitivity training. How did the CEO and president of The Word Network respond? Adell was going to sue them — as if he were the true victim — for defaming him. This response is evidence of the white body’s perceived innocence and superiority in the United
States. The white privilege shows us that even as perpetrators of crimes and offenses, they must still be the victim, or they acted out of a valid reason. This white privilege that still exists in the nation today separates the country. It prevents a true American society from authentically being united.

AN INSULT TO OUR INTELLECT

Being told to get over the joke and that someone is being too sensitive about it is an insult to the African-American intellect. Are we just not getting the joke that we do not find it funny? It is because we understand the joke and recognize the characterization and the history it goes against that we take offense. It is because we get what this CEO is saying that we are taking a stand against such way of thinking.

When a group of journalists called for a public apology and some cultural sensitivity training, it was taken as an attack worthy of a lawsuit.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 17

As mentioned earlier, we live in a country where Black people are still seen as inferior to white people. Not just that, they are perceived as a threat. They are perceived to be dangerous. Thus, there is no reason to stand up against the Adell when he calls these preachers “hoes.” Maybe they can handle the insult since they are such dangerous thugs. When a group of journalists called for a public apology and some cultural sensitivity training, it was taken as an attack worthy of a lawsuit. Douglas also wrote:
“A free Black body is a dangerous body because it presumably threatens the very social order... By entering into the white space, and perhaps thriving in it, a free Black body contests the very notion of white supremacy. The ideology of white supremacy is maintained to the extent that white bodies continue their subjugating control over nonwhite bodies. The moment that this controlling leadership is subverted, the ideology of white supremacy is fractured... if white people cannot subdue the most inferior beings, then whom can they control?”

Through these deprecating photoshopped images, Adell is striving to uphold white supremacy.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 18

Black preachers are making The Word Network successful. It is the Black preachers who are making this network thrive. Perhaps the white CEO of this network, despite the profit he is making off these Black preachers, still feels threatened, simply because he is white and they are Black. Through these deprecating photoshopped images, Adell is striving to uphold white supremacy. By calling himself a pimp and the Black preachers his hoes, he is saying he is still in control.

THE MORAL IDENTITY OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS

The Bible tells us of our worth. Like the white person, we were purchased at a high price, the blood of the King Jesus Christ (1 Cor.
6:20). Every human soul has infinite value, because Jesus was willing to die for humanity. The moral identity of African-Americans is distinguished as the courage to be oneself, the courage to be the child of God — no more and no less.

Accepting and rolling over for this white CEO when he says “get over it” is something less than who we were in Jesus Christ. Our moral identity in the Lord is free from the human invention of the superiority of one race over another. It lets go of cultural beliefs that one people is more valuable than another. This moral identity is shared by all human beings, as every human is created in the image and likeness of the Lord. Dr. King also believed that one who lives in the image of God is free.

Adell, by spreading this picture, is sending and supporting the message that the Black preachers are hoes — characters who are desperate and those without a choice. The pimp controls their welfare, their money, and their lives. Hoes are not free. In other words, they are mere slaves of the pimp.

As brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must unite to defend the dignity and the value of fellow believers.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 19

This is a call to end the kind of slavery that still exists in the United States of America. There exists today a culture of slavery, and African-Americans are morally slaves of white people. The human dignity of African-American preachers has been violated. As brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must unite to defend the dignity and the value of fellow believers. Each member of the African-American community, especially the members of the Black clergy, is called to participate in the abolition of slavery. Engage in the struggle to end this culture of oppression for your brothers and sisters in the faith.
Participate in the commitment to freedom. Your participation is indeed a matter of faith, knowing that you are standing for the oppressed and against injustice. As a community of faith, let us take a stand for freedom, dignity, and justice.

Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their servants and their people. But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation. (Jeremiah 22:3-5)
“Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal.”
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.

Proverbs 20:17 ESV

DEFENDER OR OPPRESSOR OF THE MINORITY

Dr. King once said, “History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.” As of this writing, we are in a battle to take down The Word Network from every cable network that carries it. This protest and boycott comes from the inappropriate and racially charged meme
that Kevin Adell, CEO and president of The Word Network, sent to several people, including Bishop George Bloomer, of an image of him in a white coat, dressed up as a pimp, and other Black clergy as his hoes. Bishop Bloomer was one of the “hoes” portrayed in the image. He sent it to people as a joke, not to bring outrage or action to whoever made it.

When challenged about it, Adell told Bishop Bloomer to get over it. Even in a face-to-face confrontation, the CEO maintained that Bishop Bloomer was being too sensitive about it, sending him another photoshopped image, where Bishop Bloomer was portrayed as the “Tattoo” of Adell. The racial implications of both images cannot be overlooked and a public apology was merited. However, this protest is still ongoing because of the unrepentant and smug attitude that Adell displayed throughout all of this. In fact, he even threatened to sue a journalist group for calling for him to issue a public apology and to undergo cultural sensitivity training. He claimed such calls were defaming.

Dr. King said, “The hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.”

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 20

The behavior and mindset of the owner of what is supposed to be the largest African-American religious network, should come as a surprise. It could shock people to see such inconsistency in the behavior and in the business of this media mogul. However, a look at the history of The Word Network, it would come to make sense. Dr. King said, “The hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.” Today is the time to act on this great immorality and injustice.
OF PRETENSE AND SHAMS

The details of the conflict and lack of integrity regarding how The Word Network began would paint a picture of the man behind this controversy. Peter Grant of the *Wall Street Journal* investigated how prominent Black clergy were called in to help in a network tactic to get on the air, while a white family lucratively benefitted from this lopsided deal. I will get into the details and comment on them in this chapter. Having said that, I want to begin by pointing out how the lack of integrity truly results in unworkability. When something is amiss, when something internally is not consistent with the external image, one way or another, the truth would be revealed, things would break down, and integrity would be demanded.

*When something is amiss, when something internally is not consistent with the external image, one way or another, the truth would be revealed.*

*Ameri**ca’s Original Sin Principle No. 21*

In March 2002, African-American protests began in front of the headquarters of Charter Communications Inc., a cable television operation. Led by Rev. Al Sharpton, the protest was staged to put pressure on the company to begin carrying The Word Network. During this time, TWN was only three years-old, but its programming already consisted mainly of African-American church services. It worked. The pressure was applied and The Word Network became one of the nation’s top five religious networks to air through satellite and cable operations in the United States and other countries.

By 2003, it had reached 32 million households. It was through civil rights promotion and protests that The Word Network was
able to secure spots in these operators’ packages. Due to how The Word Network secured their carriage in cable networks, it was supposed to promote positive African-American influences and models juxtaposed by the sexual, violent, and negative portrayal of Blacks on TV.

The world saw The Word Network as a ray of hope for the image and pride of the African-American community. In fact, Black leaders interceded on behalf of this network. Some names included, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Dick Gregory, Martin Luther King, III and Johnnie Cochran, Jr. The Word Network seemed like something worth fighting for.

Because of the support of different African-American communities, they also received donations from backers of Word, according to Rev. Sharpton, Rev. Jackson and other participants. Since these leaders support the cause of promoting The Word Network, or sometimes even putting pressure on cable providers to include the network in their package, they receive donations. Nevertheless, Rev. Sharpton and Rev. Jackson did not say how much were received.

Basically, if you look at their books, most of The Word Network’s earnings go to the overhead expenses for their other businesses.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 22

It looks noble and pure from the outside. However, if you look inside the leadership of The Word Network, you would discover that it is controlled by a white family, who made its riches in automobiles and broadcasting. During that time, the main man was Frank Adell, father of Kevin Adell, their family members of a white Detroit-area. Basically, if you look at their books, most of The Word Network’s
earnings go to the overhead expenses of their other businesses. For example, a huge chunk of their $7.6 million revenue in 2001 went to cover rent, satellite transmission, and other services, according to court documents that the *Wall Street Journal* obtained.

**A WHITE MAN PULLING OUT THE “BLACK RACE CARD”**

In the long and historically-charged fight for equal rights and dignity, African-American leaders have been using aggressive strategies with companies in the country, putting pressure on them to increase minority hiring, funnel business to Black vendors, and to cease discriminatory practices. It has been more than 30 years and there is still a struggle to completely experience these basic demands. Whether anyone likes it or not, this struggle comes from the trauma of years of African-American slavery and discriminatory practices that still exist in the country. In 2003, in the face of boycotts, lawsuits and protests, multimillion dollar companies somewhat conceded, including Texaco Inc., Coca-Cola Co. and the Denny’s restaurant chain. For Black leaders, the tactics were justified because they were fighting to undo centuries of racism.

*For The Word Network, the owners used the cause of fighting corporations for racial equality as a tactic to ultimately secure their personal agenda.*

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 23*

For The Word Network, the owners used the cause of fighting corporations for racial equality as a tactic to ultimately secure their personal agenda. For the African-American backers, they understandably believed playing hardball with cable operators and
other companies was necessary to address the television industry’s history of discrimination and negative portrayal of Blacks in TV programming. According to Sam Riddle, one of the protest’s lead organizers, “We were not in the shakedown business. We were in the shakeup business.” They saw a cause worth fighting for in terms of bringing equality and dignity for African-Americans and how they are portrayed in mass media.

The Adells have a record of receiving support from African-American activists for both their business and personal legal battles. They would usually use the pretense that they are “championing the cause” of African-Americans to get their support, even when the fight is unrelated to The Word Network and only involves personal real estate issues.

WHEN YOU DON’T HONOR YOUR WORD

The Adells maneuvered The Word Network into being the carriage of major cable companies and making a thriving business out of African-American religious shows, with the help and support of Black leaders, clergy, and protesters.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 24

The Adells maneuvered The Word Network into being the carriage of major cable companies and making a thriving business out of African-American religious shows, with the help and support of Black leaders, clergy, and protesters. However, their true intentions have been questioned significantly in 2003. There were four Black clergymen who sued the Adells over not honoring their end of the
deal. These men included, Bishop P. A. Brooks, Bishop Andrew Merritt, Bishop Wayne T. Jackson, and Bishop Holly.

They apparently committed ownership stakes and other participation to these clergymen in the early stages of The Word Network. They were to get onboard and help establish The Word Network as the largest African-American religious network, but they were to do so as active participants and stakeholders of the company. Unfortunately, that particular case was settled out of court for undisclosed terms.

Once a support of the Adells and The Word Network, Mr. Riddle once asked, “Does Kevin pimp racism for his own personal end? It could certainly be perceived that way.” It’s funny how Riddle used the term “pimp,” which is almost prophetic and has become the reason for the present controversy. Kevin Adell used the “racism” card to get what he wants for corporations he was dealing with.

Kevin Adell used the “racism” card to get what he wants for corporations he was dealing with.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 25

The people who formed Adell Broadcasting Corporation, included the late Horace Sheffield Jr., a prominent labor and civil-rights organizer, and his son, Rev. Horace Sheffield, III, head of the Detroit chapter of Rev. Sharpton’s National Action Network. Other members of the group included James Panagos, who was Adell Broadcasting’s original programming manager. According to Panagos, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) granted Adell the license because its stockholders included minorities. According to an FCC spokeswoman, the agency had the practice of weighing minority ownership when making licensing decisions, but this has become an outdated practice.
BROKEN COMMITMENTS AND THE LACK OF INTEGRITY

In 1999, the Adells formed a plan to build a national network focusing on gospel music and Black church services. To put the wheels in motion, they organized a group of five African-American clergy in the Detroit area to travel to El Segundo, California, hold a conference with the executives of DirecTV, the country’s largest satellite-television company. Rev. Jackson also attended the meeting. The purpose was simply to persuade DirecTV to carry The Word Network.

The day before they met with DirecTV, the clergy asked for a stake in the new network at a meeting with the Adells. The witness to this was Denise Johnson, a broker of religious media who helped the Adells arrange the participation of the five clergy to help in closing a deal with DirecTV. According to this witness, the Adells actually committed to give each clergyman a three-percent stake in the company.

Would this deal have been closed if they knew it was only the Adells who had the primary stake in this company? It would most likely have not.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 26

On the day of the conference, DirecTV executives approved the decision to carry The Word Network. What caused them to arrive at this decision? The officials actually believed that the Black ministers were the rightful owners and active participants in the network. Would this deal have been closed if they knew it was only the Adells who had the primary stake in this company? It would most likely have not.
When the new Word Network launched in early 2000, four of the clergy were not given what they were due, resulting in a lawsuit. They alleged that the Adells were not honoring their commitment. According to tax records, Charles Ellis, III, the fifth clergyman, was the only Black serving on The Word Network’s board in 2003.

In response to the four ministers’ lawsuit, the Adells categorically denied that they committed to make the ministers partners in The Word Network.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 27

In response to the four ministers’ lawsuit, the Adells categorically denied that they committed to make the ministers partners in The Word Network. Did they just allow FCC to believe the ministers were owners and active stakeholders in the network? Did the Adells intentionally dupe the clergymen into thinking they would be partners if they help close the deal?

According to 2003 network head of operations, Lewis Gibbs, The Word Network’s revenue comes chiefly from the charges that the Black clergy pay to have their services carried in the lineup, which was about $2,500 per half hour in 2003, according to Lewis Gibbs. The ministers typically earn a portion of that revenue back by using their programs to sell tapes, CDs and other materials. As mentioned, much of The Word Network’s revenue is used to fund other Adell companies.

Was Adell playing the “racism” card to get his way and to promote his business? Yes. Was he using the “race” card to champion the cause of African-Americans? If he was able to do so, it wasn’t his primary motive. He used it when it was convenient for him, but he never really followed through on any injustice, as long as he was happy and his business was making profit.
What separates Adell from the white oppressors centuries ago who used Black slaves for their purposes and welfare?

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 28

Adell is a fraud, because of how he tricked Black clergy into helping him build a network for African-Americans, when in reality, he was just going where the money was. He isn’t a true defender of the rights and welfare of African-American clergy and people. He was an oppressor, who made money off them. What separates Adell from the white oppressors centuries ago who used Black slaves for their purposes and welfare?
CHAPTER 4

THE ANATOMY OF A GENUINE APOLOGY: A CASE AGAINST ADELL’S MOST-AWAITED “APOLOGY”

“I am sorry to have to say that the vast majority of white Americans are racist, either consciously or unconsciously.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

Matthew 12:25 ESV

THE APOLOGY THAT WAS DEMANDED

It was in September when an incident broke out involving Kevin Adell, white owner and CEO of The Word Network, billed “the largest, African-American religious network in the world.” It was
only in the first week of November when he issued an apology for sharing a meme that depicts him pimping popular Black clergy. Here is the statement that was released through The Foster Jones Group and shared with the Christian Post on November 8 of this year:

“When I set out to create The Word Network 20 years ago, it was my goal to provide a platform that would spread the word of God and continue to build His kingdom by providing hope and inspiration to those who felt hopeless and voiceless, but I didn’t build this ministry alone. The Word Network is only where it is today because of stellar, committed visionaries, who are passionate about changing lives and making our world a better place. I am grateful beyond measure for each and every one of them.

With that said, the recent allegations made against me, based on a visual that wasn’t created by me, were clearly disturbing and don’t depict who I am, nor my character. To Bishop George Bloomer, whom I have tremendous respect for, worked with for nearly a decade, called a friend over the years and shared many laughs, I apologize profusely. I, too, am hurt by the allegations from someone who I held in the highest esteem and partnered with to spread the gospel. I have also sought counsel from African-American clergy, many who comprise The Word Network, and others who I respect and are not affiliated with the network.”
The apology is unclear as to for the focus for his apology.

America's Original Sin Principle No. 29

This statement came after Adell refused to apology to Bishop Bloomer, who is at the center of the issues surrounding the CEO. Despite the fact that Bishop Bloomer personally reached out to Adell and told him it was not funny and that he should get rid of it, Adell simply said Bishop Bloomer was being too sensitive. During this time, Adell was saying Bishop Bloomer “quit the network … because he wanted more airtime.” Adell also said that Bishop Bloomer was stirring up controversy “to get support to hopefully make changes so he could get back on the air.” Yet, in this formal statement of apology, he said he apologizes profusely to Bishop Bloomer. However, after reading this, I am confused as to what he is apologizing for exactly. Is he apologizing for saying Bishop Bloomer was doing this to get support? Was he apologizing for the meme of the pimp and hoes portrayal? Was it for the image of Bishop Bloomer as Tattoo? The apology is unclear as to what he is saying sorry for.

According to a separate interview between the Christian Post and W.J. Rideout, III, senior pastor of All God’s People Church, in Detroit, Michigan, he did not buy Adell’s apology. He led a protest at The Word Network’s Southfield, Michigan headquarters in October. According to him:

“That wasn’t a true apology coming from Kevin Adell; that’s a third-party apology. …Kevin Adell don’t apologize. Kevin Adell has pride. … He’s the type that feels like he’s right even when he’s double wrong. I’ve been around him; I’ve worked under him. This guy lies in his sleep, lies when he stands up, he lies when there is no reason to lie. Nobody should trust Kevin right now.”
From an observer’s perspective, the apology did not come from him, it came from someone he hired to make the issue go away.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 30

The apology came through the Foster Jones Group, a marketing agency that represents Adell. He did not even appear in-person to read his statement. He simply got a marketing company to address the issue for him. From an observer’s perspective, the apology did not come from him; it came from someone he hired to make the issue go away. If someone truly wants to make an apology, he can try doing so in private, which he had a chance to do with Bishop Bloomer. Making the apology in person, whether in a public or private setting, instead of through a written statement through a marketing group is a statement in itself from Adell. He is making sure the words are there but that his heart is not. He is making sure the world knows the manner by which his apology was sent.

OF BETRAYALS OF TRUST

The African-American staff and the patrons of The Word Network trusted Adell to respect the dignity of African-Americans, despite being in a country that has a long history of prejudice and racism.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 31

According to Robert Solomon and Fernando Flores, authors of Building Trust: In Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life, there
are two categories of disappointment, or betrayal of trust. Because without the risk of betrayal, there can never be trust. In the case of this white CEO of an African-American religious network, the Black clergy and staff that are keeping his business afloat trusted him. The African-American staff and the patrons of The Word Network trusted Adell to respect the dignity of African-Americans, despite being in a country that has a long history of prejudice and racism. Adell betrayed that trust when he maliciously shared the photoshopped meme with him as a pimp and the very people who trusted him as “hoes.”

The two categories of disappointment or betrayal are 1) the category of things not working out. It’s no one’s fault that things did not work out, and 2) the category that has to do with mistakes. Sometimes, things do no work out, but someone is obviously at fault.

**People trusted Adell, someone in authority, to value and protect the pride of the people he was servicing. He betrayed this trust.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 32*

The falling out between Kevin Adell and George Bloomer was not something that just did not work out, and no one is at fault. In their case, one party offended the dignity of the other party. People trusted Adell, someone in authority, to value and protect the pride of the people he was servicing. He betrayed this trust. It would seem that Adell was just after the profit after all.

It’s not human error in such a way that Adell really did not mean for the joke to be a racial slur. It cannot be blamed on ignorance or inexperience. He is the CEO of a Black network. He is supposed to protect and promote the rights of African-Americans. He must not be at the forefront of sending out degrading memes.
A highly important point of distinction here is for us to be clear on the difference between mere disappointments and mistakes, and between mistakes which someone is to blame and those for which none is. Blameworthiness does necessarily signify a breach of trust, but it means there is a need for negotiation and understanding. However, if one party rejected the need for such, then certainly there would be no authentic trust that can take place.

**When someone is claiming to be an advocate for the African-American faith and well-being but sends his staff memes that undermine their dignity and finds it funny to do so, then this is a sham.**

_America’s Original Sin Principle No. 33_

There are acts that are indeed breaches of trust and not mere disappointments, such as the case of Kevin Adell. When someone is claiming to be an advocate for the African-American faith and well-being but sends his staff memes that undermine their dignity and finds it funny to do so, then this is a sham. He is pretending to support the African-American community, like a noble cause he holds, but in reality, it is a profitable business.

The mistake here is not about the person’s competence but rather his integrity. When he is misrepresenting himself as something, when there is fraudulence, then it’s a different story.

Blameworthiness concerns the person’s arrogance, insincerity, or lack of self-understanding. And this is no longer merely a matter of making a mistake.

We have entered the realm of apologies and excuses. By apologies, we are not referring to those
bits of courtesy that may well be independent of blame, polite expressions of sympathy rather than expressions of remorse. But we also do not mean *mere* expressions of remorse, the verbal equivalent of looking shamefaced or beating one’s brow.\textsuperscript{12}

We define apology as a speech act, as words that carry with them meaning and action.

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 34*

For the sake of discussion, we define apology as a speech act, as words that carry with them meaning and action. So many actions in the context of trust and commitment are not mere expressions, but a way of “doing things with words.” It is appropriate to ask, what did Kevin Adell’s apology statement, which was sent through a marketing agency, intend to do? Did it express mere remorse? Did it accept blame? Did it show admittance that he acted in an arrogant manner? Did he even mention his insincerity to uphold the dignity of the African-American clergy when he sent out *that* meme? What did this PR ploy really accomplish?

An apology can be sincere or insincere. The intentions of the one making the apology would determine what the apology does.

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 35*
An apology can be sincere or insincere. The intentions of the one making the apology would determine what the apology does. A sincere apology can restore and make amends or bring about healing. On the other hand, an insincere apology only causes more hurt and widens the gap.

An apology can also be well-timed or too late. Sometimes it can be suspiciously too early. In this case, the right and best time probably was when Bishop George Bloomer was already in front of Adell, schooling him about the inappropriate meme. Bishop Bloomer gave him several opportunities to apologize. Those could have been the best times. Anything after that is too late, yet it was still called for. In fact, the moment Bishop Bloomer left the network, Adell already owed the public an apology for his racist behavior. It could not be an internal issue anymore.

Kevin Adell exposed his true intentions. He revealed his insincerity and his pretensions. He was portraying himself to be a friend to the African-American community, claiming to be an inspiration to the hopeless and the voiceless. How can someone, who finds a racially inappropriate and derogatory image funny become an inspiration for the Black community?

The one who makes the apology, desires the one he offended to respond with “I forgive you;” “Forget it;” or “No problem.”

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 36

The apology, as a speech act, is not just some way to express one’s feelings. Instead, it is a way of initiating a conversation and a bit of negotiation. The one who makes the apology, desires the one he offended to respond with “I forgive you;” “Forget it;” or “No problem.” Is this what Kevin Adell really wants now? Does he want Bishop Bloomer and the African-American community to say, “I
forgive you”? Is he seeking forgiveness? You cannot even see his face, so you cannot judge how sincere he is in this act, because you cannot see his eyes.

AN APOLOGY IS NOT A MAGIC WAND FOR FORGIVENESS

An apology is a statement of intention to redeem oneself and to begin a conversation about how something can be done.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 37

An apology is not a social magic wand that magically makes forgiveness exist. Forgiveness is not automatic and assured just because someone made an apology. This assumption in itself can bring about serious misunderstanding and a betrayal of trust between Adell, Bishop Bloomer, and the African-American clergy and community. An apology does not erase the error for which the offender violated the trusting relationship. Instead, an apology is a statement of intention to redeem oneself and to begin a conversation about how something can be done — how can Adell redeem himself with the African-American clergy and community? More importantly, at this moment, does he even intend to? Does he see the need to? Does he see the African-American community as people with dignity, worthy of such an apology? Or does he see us as a business opportunity he does not want to lose?
An excuse puts the blame on anything or anyone else other than oneself.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 38

Excuses cannot substitute for apologies. An excuse is a speech act, but it merely reacts to the mistake and breaches of trust. An excuse puts the blame on anything or anyone else other than oneself. Jean-Paul Sartre’s philosophy tells us, “there are no excuses,” because people are responsible for everything they do and what becomes of them.

There is a need to be wary of people who automatically make excuses when they would really be better off looking for a solution to their issues, instead of shifting the blame to someone else. Instead of trying to face up to the damage they have done and figure out the best way to repair it, they would be defensive (like filing a case against another party, saying they were defaming him).

Furthermore, another kind of breach of trust is indifference. It is the lack of sufficient caring, which is what we have truly witnessed with Adell from the beginning of this incident. This offense can be in simple inattention or maybe even shameful disregard for another person. Care is an essential ingredient in any trusting relationship. Thus, the lack of concern stands as an antithesis to trust.

Insincerity is the space for breaches of trust to occur. One may be insincere in making a commitment or a promise, which we saw with how Adell acted with the four Black clergy whom he did not give shares, despite them helping him get The Word Network started. Similarly, one may make an insincere offer with no intention of seeing it through, hoping perhaps that the recipient will forget about it, be too polite to follow through, or too timid to file suit or seek other recourse. Does it sound familiar? The worse kind of insincerity is lying, which is distinguished as wholesale insincerity, stating as truth what one fully knows not to be true.
The worse kind of insincerity is lying, which is distinguished as wholesale insincerity, stating as truth what one fully knows not to be true.

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 39*

Adell had a history of breach of trust with the Black clergy. Now, we see him being insincere, making excuses, and offering a vague apology. How can the African-American community trust someone who is indifferent to what hurts them, even finding it funny? Sending a faceless apology statement through his marketing agency, just shows how much he cares about the African-American whom he claims he wanted to inspire since he founded The Word Network. Should we add “lies” to the list of breaches of trust that Adell has been blameworthy of?
“One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of the status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 ESV
In the year 2000, The Word Network approached Charter Communications Inc. and pitched the network to Patty McCaskill, who was the vice-president for programming for the company. During this time, the response was they already have other religious networks, which included Black clergy, and how it would be expensive for them to carry The Word Network, as they would have to have new equipment to carry the signal. About nine months after, Adell tried again, but McCaskill said the same thing. Adell said he had a lot of support from the African-American community. About a month after, the National Action Network said their representatives wanted to meet to resolve a number of issues. When they came in, they went with Adell and said they were concerned with the minority-hiring practices of Charter. Adell’s presence was claimed to be support for the National Action Network.

During this time, once Charter agreed to carry the network, the protesters demanding action on minority hiring issues stopped. Why didn’t Adell encourage the protesters to follow through if he was really concerned about the cause? Moreover, soon after the Charter protest, Adell also used African-American organizations’ help in a personal dispute.

African-American groups were used to further the interest of the white man.

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 40*
ADELL’S PSEUDO-CAUSE AND HIS PERSONAL AGENDA

Adell was involved in a legal fight over a $3.1 million home he wanted to build in a Detroit suburb. Adell filed a lawsuit accusing John Richards Homes Building Co., Birmingham, Michigan, and a unit of Charter One Financial Inc. of conspiring to inflate the value of the land. As the lawsuits were filed, groups including the Michigan chapter of the National Action Network also issued a news release accusing Charter One of discriminatory lending practices and other abuses. Again, African-American groups were used to further the interest of the oppressor, which has shown up as white privilege.

Adell claimed he was being treated unfairly because of his association with The Word Network. Was he claiming he was experiencing discriminatory practices because he owned a predominantly Black network? Was he claiming to be a victim of prejudice and racism – by association? Seriously, he’s not really a victim here.

As a result, Adell attempted to force John Richards into involuntary bankruptcy. However, a U.S. bankruptcy court prevented this effort, and earlier this year awarded John Richards $6.4 million in damages, one of the largest rulings ever charged against someone for a wrongful involuntary bankruptcy filing. The Wall Street Journal reported how U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Steven Rhodes ruled, “Adell’s conduct was reprehensible and must be deterred and punished.” As such, Rev. Sharpton publicly expressed how he is rethinking his relationship with the network. Moreover, John Richards shared how they are having a difficult time collecting the compensation that the judge awarded, because Adell took steps to shield his assets, which included moving to Florida. It was in Florida where Adell bought a $2.8 million home to take advantage of that state’s homestead law, making it challenging for creditors to seize property.
All along, Adell has been playing African-American groups as pawns for his personal agenda.

**AMERICA’S ORIGINAL SIN PRINCIPLE NO. 41**

This is the kind of person Adell is. He is not really after equal rights in the workplace. He is just using the threat of being a whistleblower to discriminatory practices to move his interests forward. All along, Adell has been playing African-American groups as pawns for his personal agenda.

In September, Judge Rhodes ruled that Adell cannot use the state’s homestead law to shelter the home from his creditors, as he failed to demonstrate that he intended to live in Florida for good. November 14, a few days after the deadline for selling the house passed, Adell sought a petition for bankruptcy protection.14

**RESIST AND BREAK THE CYCLE**

Adell has been using African-American clergy and organizations to benefit his personal agenda because we are letting him.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 42

In Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco’s *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt*, they wrote, “Resistance came, as it often does, when workers found the courage to stand up to abuse, breaking the cycle of fear that keeps the system in place.”15 Adell has been using African-American clergy and organizations to benefit his personal agenda because we are letting him. We are not breaking the cycle of fear.
because we are not resisting. He has been using Black preachers and groups, pretending to be a proponent of equal rights in the workplace, when he is playing them in such a way that he can keep his image going. He has been like the puppet master, and these Black preachers were on his strings. At the end of the day, he is the one who ultimately profits from the Black clergy on his network. He is the one who cashes in from “inspiring the hopeless and the voiceless.”

Adell’s actions exposed his true heart. Those who think Black protesters who are fighting to get The Word Network off cable stations are overreacting need to rethink their stand. If they are not doing anything or if they are even opposing this protest, then they are standing in support of the cycle of fear. They are standing to keep this cycle going so that the African-American remains the puppet, manipulated and used for personal gain.

In Hedges and Sacco’s work, they quoted Lucas Benitez, an organizer for efforts to protest abuses in his area:

These conditions are hereditary. They exist and have existed for generations. First you had slaves. Then you had freed slaves. Then you had poor whites and sharecroppers. Now you have immigrants. It is all part of a continuum we have to break.16

Benitez also said, “We discovered that we could not wait for someone from the outside to come and save us.” Adell is an outsider. He did not come to save African-Americans or to even help their cause. He saw a profitable business. Like any businessman, he took the opportunity. It was not about some noble cause to inspire the voiceless.
sincerely do not care for the dignity of African-Americans, as exhibited by his actions and indifference, is a step towards healing this broken system.

America's Original Sin Principle No. 43

Unfortunately, it is the system itself in this country that is broken. There needs to be a change in the balance of power between the Blacks and the whites in order for change to be experienced. Removing people like Kevin Adell from running influential networks, taking away the authority from people who sincerely do not care for the dignity of African-Americans, as exhibited by his actions and indifference, is a step towards healing this broken system.

BEYOND A DISCRIMINATORY MEME

It is because people are not more outraged by this that results in a country that thinks the Black body can be offended, and it is funny to do so.

America's Original Sin Principle No. 44

It’s not just a meme. Anyone who thinks, “What’s the big fuss about? It’s just a joke,” clearly does not understand how the cycle of violence and fear is sustained in this country. It is because white powerful men think it is funny and it is okay to share images like this that such a racist culture exists in the country. It is because people are not more outraged by this that results in a country that thinks the Black body can be offended, and it is funny to do so.
One of the most powerful and profound quotes in Hedges and Sacco’s work says, “Rape and indiscriminate violence are the legacies of the white conquest.” The poverty levels of those who are discriminated against created massive destruction within the community. Rape and violence are among the most dominant effects. It is the dominance of white Americans that led them to an environment of rape and violence.

George Orwell, critic and author on social injustice, wrote about how all tyrannies rule through fraud and force. Adell is very much aware of this system of tyranny as events in the past weeks have shown a history of silent tyranny, using African-American groups to move forward his personal agenda. According to Orwell,

Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled on, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself.

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A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled on, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself. – George Orwell

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 45

How does sending out a meme depicting oneself as a pimp and Black clergy on one’s staff as your hoes for the purpose of making a joke, contribute to a world of “fear, and treachery, and torment?”
People might seem it’s an exaggeration to see such an incident like this. However, it is only when people think such derogatory images can be funny that such a world can exist. A person, who is already making money off Black viewers, can still think that such a meme is funny, and those who take offense are too sensitive.

What kind of world do we live in if you see nothing wrong with a white CEO sending his people such memes? Exactly what Orwell predicted in the fifties, a world that has grown more merciless, a world that not only finds derogatory images offensive but finds them funny. Do we simply laugh because the white man said it was funny? Was Bishop George Bloomer supposed to say, “Oh, I’m sorry I was offended when you thought it was funny that I was your hoe and you were my pimp”?

The African-American clergy and community deserve a sincere apology.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 46

The African-American clergy and community deserve a sincere apology. An apology, like I said in another piece, is not a magic wand for forgiveness and for the world to be right again. Instead, an apology begins a conversation of how one can redeem oneself from a blameworthy mistake, and what one can do about it. It is too much for Kevin Adell to show his face and say he is sorry as a means of breaking the cycle of fear and intimidation in this country. Such an apology tells the world that we don’t deserve any better than a statement concocted by a marketing company. Black people need more than an insincere, vague, faceless apology. This apology does not even tell you how he can make it right. In fact, such a move only makes sure this cycle of intimidation is kept alive.
CIVIL RIGHTS AND BREAKING THE CYCLE OF INTIMIDATION

It's time to stand up to people like him and show them that when you have bigoted actions, it has consequences.

America's Original Sin Principle No. 47

It seems that no matter how hard the Black community fights, there is still someone who thinks they are in the position to play with the human dignity and freedom of African-Americans. No, it’s not just a meme. It’s how people like Kevin Adell, really think and see the Black community. It’s time to stand up to people like him and show them that when you have bigoted actions, it has consequences. Dominique Harrison defined civil rights below:

Civil rights by definition are sets of guaranteed privileges that include equal treatment, equal opportunity, and the ability to be free from discrimination. The civil rights movement in the United States was a decades-long struggle with the goal of enforcing constitutional and legal rights for African-Americans. The movement was mostly about getting the federal government to force state governments to follow federal law in voting, job equality, integration of public schools, equality in housing, and equal protection under all laws. Many African-Americans suffered violence, discrimination, prejudice, intimidation, and death at the hands of white Americans and white
Many African-Americans suffered violence, discrimination, prejudice, intimidation, and death at the hands of white Americans and white supremacist groups in their fight for civil rights.” – Dominique Harrison

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 48

When someone says, “You’re being too sensitive” when you are offended when someone laughs at the fact that you are depicted as a hoe, you don’t take it sitting down. You don’t move on and pretend it doesn’t happen. You fight to be acknowledged. You fight to be respected. If you don’t do it for yourself, then you end up ignoring how those before you fought and lost their lives believing they deserve to be treated with equality and respect not only as citizens of this country but as human beings.
“We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

Proverbs 18:21 ESV

NEGRO TO BLACK TO AFRICAN-AMERICANS

It was in the seventies when there was a successful imposition of using “Black” over “Negro,” renewing themes of the Black Power movement in the 1960s. In 1988, Jesse Jackson announced that members of their race preferred to be called “African-American” to replace the term “Black.” The move was because Jackson wanted an ethnic reference instead of a racial one, aiming to create a sense of ethnic identity among Black Americans.
Names can be more than tags; they can convey powerful imagery. So naming — proposing, imposing, and accepting names — can be a political exercise. And the call for Blacks to be African-Americans was for more than a manner of speaking... Every ethnic group in this country has a reference to some land base, some historical cultural base. African-Americans have hit that level of cultural maturity. There are Armenian-Americans and Jewish-Americans and Arab-Americans and Italian Americans; and with a degree of accepted and reasonable pride, they connect their heritage to their mother country and where they are now.20

In the middle of the calls to boycott The Word Network because of how Kevin Adell shared a derogatory meme to his staff portraying him as a pimp and some Black preachers as his hoes and how he found it funny, we find that the power of names is crucial to our African-American identity. Bishop George Bloomer accused Adell of refusing to apologize for the meme he sent to his staff.

We find that the power of names is crucial to our African-American identity.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 49

When he went to Adell face-to-face regarding this issue to express how the image was offensive, in response Adell sent Bloomer a photo in a white tuxedo, with the caption, “The show last night was good, Tattoo.” Again, Tattoo is the dwarf from a TV show called Fantasy Island, who ran around calling Mr. Roarke, “Boss.” In other words, Adell was naming himself as the “boss” with Bishop Bloomer as his dwarf “Tattoo.”
Images, like names, have the power to give identity to people. People who propose, impose, and accept names are creating a new identity for people. If Bishop Bloomer is to simply just accept these jokes, he is also accepting the deprecating humor attached to it. Adell was proposing and imposing something with those images. He even found it funny, funny enough that he called Bloomer too sensitive when he took offense to it.

THE IDENTITY OF THE PAST

This call for a boycott is a call to take a stand for one’s African-American identity. On the other hand, the lack of participation also speaks to the acceptance of the imposition that these memes stand for. Should African-Americans simply accept white authority, even in a joking manner, calling them hoes or Tattoo characters?

Such conversations that involve names or impositions are critical and serious for African-Americans, because there is a history of slavery.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 50

During the name change from Negro to Black, Black leaders called for the renewed awareness of African history. They evoked themes of exploitation and entitlement. Slavery alienated Black Americans from their African roots, and even today, descendants of slave masters discourage any real study of the ties between Africa and America. Such conversations that involve names or impositions are critical and serious for African-Americans, because there is a history of slavery. They do not just want to pick a fight or to create drama. When white authorities do acts that disrespect the dignity
of Black preachers, it does evoke a history of slavery and themes of exploitation. That is how powerful labels and names are.

The Black Power movement was all about creating in the community an aroused and sustained Black consciousness that would give the basis for political strength. From birth, Black people are fed lies about their identity. The 1989 cultural offensive to build an African-American identity, is a tribute to Black history as the Black community seeks “to restore our cultural umbilical cord in the face of the persistence of white America to drum inferiority into us.” What Kevin Adell did and how he initially refused to apologize for it and the insincere statement of apology he sent, is proof of white America’s resistance to acknowledge African-Americans as their equal.

What Kevin Adell did and how he initially refused to apologize for it and the insincere statement of apology he sent, is proof of white America’s resistance to acknowledge African-Americans as their equal.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 51

Until the late 1960s, “Black” was an insult to many Negroes, and the nationalist’s campaign for the term posed a challenge for conformity for both Negroes and whites. During that time, the name “Black” was starkly confrontational and militant, and imposing it on Negroes forced them not only to accept but to embrace undesirable racial qualities.

According to Martin, “This is the power of naming, and the public success and private failure of the idea that Black is beautiful illustrate both the reach and limitations of the 1960s separatists’ cultural revolution.” In the background of this Kevin Adell fiasco,
is a bigger issue of ethnicity, cultural acceptance, and identity. Africanness as an essence was no more defined as Blackness; however, the goal of relabeling was to strengthen group loyalty. At this time, there is a similar call to community loyalty, which is to take the stand against network owners who think it is funny to portray Black preachers as hoes or Tattoo characters.

**There is a similar call to community loyalty, which is to take the stand against network owners who think it is funny to portray Black preachers as hoes or Tattoo characters.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 52*

**BLACKNESS AND NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS**

Adell’s goal was to inspire the hopeless and the voiceless, predominantly referring to the African-American community. This sentiment is nice, especially in a statement of apology. It was intended to portray Adell as the white hero to the Black clergy and community. Nevertheless, his actions outside the public’s eye are questionable. He found the portrayal of the pimp and his hoes to be funny. He refused to apologize when privately asked to do so.

In today’s society, when the synonymy of Blackness with criminality is not new in America, experiences like this must be taken seriously. The media is playing a significant role in maintaining this image. If the CEO and President of an African-American network sees humor in such degrading images, then how can we turn things around?
Misconceptions and prejudices manufactured and disseminated through various channels such as the media included references to a “brute” image of Black males. In the 21st century, this negative imagery of Black males has frequently utilized the negative connotation of the terminology “thug.”

Little research has been conducted to show how unarmed Black male victims have been posthumously criminalized. The guilty Black body is still a recurring theme in today’s justice system. What role do mass media portrayals have in this painful trend?

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**The guilty Black body is still a recurring theme in today’s justice system.**
*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 53*

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**BRUTE TO THUG**

In the conversation of the power of naming, there is the manner by which Black male victims are portrayed by traditional mass media through the use of language that marginalizes and de-victimize these individuals. The image of the Black people, focusing on Black males, was that of a compliant character from the institution of slavery. There would be images of buffoonery, blissful ignorance, and even juvenile angst that were seen as the main traits of the enslaved Blacks. How else can the white man sleep better at night knowing they are treating human beings like animals?

There is the type of performance called “Blackface,” where white actors wore Black make-up to depict Black people in typecasts in the 19th century. These white actors performed in minstrel shows, showing their interpretation of the Black life in an as foolish, messy,
and comedic way as possible, at the expense of African-American culture. What does this remind you of? Does this remind you of a certain white CEO who found the portrayal of Black preachers as pimps, to be funny?

In the humanities, the character of Uncle Tom in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is portrayed as an older African-American slave to be faithful and dutiful to his white master. Again, does it sound familiar? In another piece of popular culture, the Disney film *Song of the South*, illustrates Uncle Remus as an elderly Black freed man who was satisfied with his place in the world singing the famous happy song, “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah.” Isn’t this in the same light that Adell was trying to portray Bishop Bloomer when he referred to him as Tattoo? Are African-Americans supposed to just be content or even elated with the approval of their white bosses?

These portrayals of Blackness as submissive and controllable exposed the perceived ability to control the Black body and mind, creating the idea that slavery was the best position for Black people.

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 54*

These portrayals of Blackness as submissive and controllable exposed the perceived ability to control the Black body and mind, creating the idea that slavery was the best position for Black people. W.E.B. DuBois talked about the status of inferiority when he wrote about how white Americans viewed freedom as a way to spoil or to ruin Black people.25

Over the years, Black power challenged white supremacy, creating a white fear for Black mobility. The wealthy whites were fearful of the political power that newly freed Black people could
acquire through voting. On the other hand, poor whites saw Blacks as competition in the labor force. This fear resulted in a shift from the perspective and stereotype that Black people were docile servants to savages and brute monsters. Since Bishop Bloomer did not submit and take it easy with the offensive joke, he is now being portrayed as causing trouble because he simply wanted more airtime. Is it really impossible for Bishop Bloomer to simply stand up for his dignity and not allow Adell to portray himself as a pimp and Bishop Bloomer as a dwarf slave named Tattoo?

Since Bishop Bloomer did not submit and take it easy with the offensive joke, he is now being portrayed as causing trouble because he simply wanted more airtime.

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 55*

The media portrayals are powerful in forming the image of the mythical Black brute. It is the power of the media that forged in the mind of white America that Blacks were more prone to violence and other aggressive behaviors. Black people are often portrayed as a horrible creature, brutal and merciless, especially against white women.

Unfortunately, as those in power and influence spread stories and myths about the savage Black brute, so did the occurrences of lynching. Lynching is distinguished as an extrajudicial punishment, which was ritualistic. It certainly struck fear in Black residents throughout the United States. It placed the supposedly free men in social slavery once again. One of the most common accusations then was the rape and assault of a white woman by a Black male. Such an allegation would have a deep impact throughout entire communities.
A young white woman accused a Black male of sexual assault in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As a result, about 300 Black people were killed, and more than 9,000 people were left homeless after white mobs destroyed the Greenwood community.28 There was no due process. People who were not involved were murdered or displaced. The white mobs seized Black defendants and attacked Black neighborhoods in order to seek out revenge for any alleged crime.

The white mobs seized Black defendants and attacked Black neighborhoods in order to seek out revenge for any alleged crime.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 56

During this time, we see the propagation of the guilty Black body. Sam Hose killed his employer in self-defense, being threatened with a gun. The newspapers described Hose as a “monster in human form.” Without a proper trial, Hose is described as a cold-blooded criminal, who killed his employer and savagely raped his employer’s wife. The report drove white people to lynch Hose. The lynching of a Black body became ritualistic to the point of taking limbs and body parts as souvenirs.

After stripping Hose of his clothes and chaining him to a tree, the self-appointed executioners stacked kerosene-soaked wood high around him...they cut off his ears, fingers, and genitals, and skinned his face...the contortions of Sam Hose’s body as the flames rose, distorting his features, causing his eyes to bulge out their sockets...Before Hose’s body had even cooled, his heart and liver were removed and cut into several pieces and his bones were crushed.
into small particles. The crowd fought over these souvenirs.29

Events like this happened in African-American history. While Blacks are portrayed as monsters and violent savages, white mobs overkill the Black body. Black men were portrayed as harmful, and it was this image that became so popular in the early 20th century by the mass media.

In the 21st century, we have a white CEO laughing at disgraceful memes and sharing it with members of his staff. America’s Original Sin Principle No. 57

In the 21st century, we have a white CEO laughing at disgraceful memes and sharing it with members of his staff. Unapologetic, he sent Bishop Bloomer another image, calling him Tattoo. There is a history of humiliation, abuse, and prejudice. Bishop Bloomer is correct to say, “That’s not right, get rid of it” to Adell, who still could not get the gravity of his actions. How can Adell claim to be on the side of the hopeless and the voiceless when he cannot get how something like this is deplorable?

There is power in naming people hoes and Tattoo. The African-American community has been victimized enough in the media that it cannot afford to simply roll over and heed to this white CEO’s half-baked attempt at an apology. African-Americans are neither the brute nor the thug. They are human beings with self-respect, created in the image of our Creator. Anything less than this portrayal is an insult and a violation of our dignity as human beings.
“Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 7:12 ESV

EVERYTHING IS SEEN THROUGH THE “WHITE GAZE”

In an interview, Toni Morrison said, “you can feel the address of the narrator over my shoulder talking to somebody else, talking to somebody white.” Such is the “white gaze.” In the United States,
if the author did not specify that he or she was writing for an African-American audience, the general assumption was they were addressing a White person. A piece of literature is written with the “white gaze” when the author needs to explain something to the audience in such a way that the author does not need to explain to a Black person.

We see this to be the case with Bishop Bloomer and Kevin Adell. A Black person does not need to explain to another Black person why the controversial meme is offensive and derogatory. However, as evidence that the “white gaze” exists, it seems that Bishop Bloomer had to explain something seemingly obvious to Adell face-to-face. A number of the news articles that came out also suggested that the authors were trying to explain the context of the situation to white people in a way that they can understand the depth of what transpired. In the video, Toni Morrison talks about how it’s as if Black authors and people’s thoughts and opinions have no meaning without the white gaze. Even in today’s society, Black people always need to explain and contextualize their thoughts according to the white gaze.

Even in today’s society, Black people always need to explain and contextualize their thoughts according to the white gaze.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 58

ALWAYS WRITING, THINKING AND SPEAKING TO THE WHITE AUDIENCE

The white gaze is when you have the white culture looking over your shoulder as you write, speak or even think. This gaze limits
the freedom of expression of the African-American, as well as his artistic style as an author. As the Black author, speaker, or thinker, one would find oneself constantly explaining — or being required to clarify — your literature or opinion to them. Ultimately, you are required to make white people your main audience, and you are no longer writing authentically to your people.

Most literature — produced by both Black people and white people — is made with a white reader in mind. Because of this, the material created serves to explain and contextualize the white experience; while using Black experiences and personalities as a way to assist white characters’ growth — without much else to offer about the Black character’s life.31

When people tell stories about people of color, it usually centers on white perspectives. Somehow, there is no way to retell stories without assisting the white supremacist creative function. The texts in American literary canon are usually strong examples of such works.

In another YouTube video,32 Morrison shared how a Nobel Peace Prize was not her greatest accomplishment; instead, it was writing in her own style, to the audience she chose to write for. Her main accomplishment is to write for her people without having to explain and contextualize it in a way that white people would understand.

Adell’s lack of understanding and sensitivity, as well as his refusal to get cultural sensitivity training, defends the white gaze privilege.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 59
Adell’s lack of understanding and sensitivity, as well as his refusal to get cultural sensitivity training, defends the white gaze privilege. He refuses to understand or to empathize. He does not need to be a witness to the people he’s supposedly helping and inspiring. He dismissed Bishop Bloomer as being too sensitive, when in reality, he needs to see beyond the white gaze.

THE CONCEPT OF WHITENESS AND THE NOTION OF BELONGING

Anthony Reddie wrote an article discussing how a framework of Black Theology and a “Black Theology gaze” can positively position Black bodies as the “other” in the context of acceptance, instead of being a victim of the concept of Whiteness and the notions of belonging.33 The homogenous constructs of Whiteness dictated what “Christian values” were, which also brought forth “imperial mission Christianity.”

There was a time when Blacks were forced to leave their homes to go to Britain to work as cheap laborers, in the areas of the British economy that their citizens felt that they were beneath the dignity of White people in Britain. Whiteness is a concept that is complex. There are a number of scholars who explored the nature of whiteness and its concomitant relationship to the notions of privilege and supremacy.

In the context of Adell’s issue, the mindset he has shown reflects his white privilege and superiority. In his refusal to apologize, and even when he does, there is a certain level of pride and air that shows the subject of his apology that he is just sending the statement for business’ sake.
STARING DOWN THE WHITE GAZE

This boycott is a way to stare down the white gaze — to resist it and to refuse to be defined by it.

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 60*

This boycott is a way to stare down the white gaze — to resist it and to refuse to be defined by it. Adell’s white privilege is the basis of his behavior towards Bishop Bloomer and the way he found that meme humorous. This boycott is our stand against it.

TRAPPED IN A WHITE MAN’S MIND

For a Black person to speak to a white world, it takes courage and a real cause. America is a world that renders invisible, people of color unless they act and speak in the language that white people speak themselves. The white gaze traps the Black people in the white imaginations. Black people’s own self-concept depends on white people’s portrayal, since they dominate most of mass media.

*Black people’s own self-concept depends on the white people’s portrayal, since they dominate most of mass media.*

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 61*

Black people are trapped in the conception of white authority. It is in the eyes of the white teacher who sees Black students and automatically lowers one’s expectation. It is in the eyes of a white police officer who sees a Black person and looks twice or even
reaches for his gun because he feels threatened. It is in the eyes of a white CEO who saw someone who is legitimately voicing a grievance about an offensive image, and saying, “You’re too sensitive.”

There is a new generation of writers after Toni Morrison, W.E.B. Du Bois, and James Baldwin who are staring down the white gaze. One of them is Ta-Nehisis Coates. He wrote in the form of a letter to his son, “Here is what I would like for you to know: In America it is traditional to destroy the Black body — it is heritage.”

Claudia Rankine is a poet who reflected on the experience of Black people as victims of Hurricane Katrina or Trayvon Martin, the 17-year old Black boy who was shot dead by a neighborhood watch volunteer. She wrote, “Because white men can’t police their imagination, Black men are dying.”

Toni Morrison is the true inspiration to the helpless and the voiceless, not someone in a white tuxedo thinking it is funny that someone portrayed him as the pimp of African-American preacher “hoes.”

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 62

Toni Morrison’s gift to the African-American community is her boldness and self-assurance to take a stand against the white gaze and simply create something that is unique for her audience. Now, she is the true inspiration to the helpless and the voiceless, not someone in a white tuxedo thinking it is funny that someone portrayed him as the pimp of African-American preacher “hoes.”

Most writers claim to abhor labels, but Morrison has always welcomed the term “Black writer.” “I’m writing for Black people,” she says, “in the same way that Tolstoy was not writing for me, a 14-year
old colored girl from Lorain, Ohio. I don’t have to apologize or consider myself limited because I don’t [write about white people] – which is not absolutely true, there are lots of white people in my books. The point is not having the white critic sit on your shoulder and approve it” – she refers to the writer James Baldwin talking about “a little white man deep inside of all of us”. Did she exorcise hers? “Well I never really had it. I just never did.”

In the case of Bishop Bloomer, the fact that the white CEO could not grasp the gravity of his actions does not devalue the disrespect and racist behavior he has shown for the Black clergy. Should we say, “Oh the white guy said it’s just a joke, so it must be funny; we should laugh and move on. Never mind if he offended a Black guy?”

As members of the African-American community, how can we stand back and allow a white man, who is running one of the largest African-American religious networks, to get away with his lack of integrity, character, and respect for the dignity of the Black preacher?
CHAPTER 8

INSTITUTIONS THAT SUSTAIN NEGATIVE AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS

By E. Bernard Jordan

“The past is prophetic in that it asserts loudly that wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows”
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.

Deuteronomy 10:17 ESV
THE SO-CALLED MYTH OF POST-RACIAL AMERICA

In a perfect world, we live in a post-racial America, where racism and prejudice are a thing of the past. Racial violence should not exist in this world. White authorities should not think so lowly of Black people. Instead Black people are treated with respect and viewed as equals.

Regrettably, post-racial America does not exist — yet. It is dangerous to think racism is dead, because it is very much alive. Mass media makes sure it is. The negative media portrayals of African-American are sure ways that it does.

On July 17, 2004, a Black male named Eric Garner was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. The medical examiner said his death was a homicide caused by the compression of the neck and of the chest. “I can’t breathe,” Garner cried out eleven times, when he was forced to the ground by New York police officers. He was pleading for help. He was calling out to the white people to hear him and to regard him as a human being.

[In order] “to hear” Garner would take those white police officers great pains. Bearing upon their white bodies is effective white history. James Baldwin argues that “it is with great pain and terror” that one begins to realize that history has shaped what, in this case, those white police officers have created as their white frame of reference. But those white offices avoid that pain and terror.35

For Kevin Adell “to hear” Bishop Bloomer, and the call of the boycott
protestors, is to bear upon himself the effective white history.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 63

In the quote above, “to hear” means to understand the other party, to remove the white gaze that distorts the view of the white man. Similarly, for Kevin Adell “to hear” Bishop Bloomer, and the call of the boycott protestors, is to bear upon himself the effective white history. His *white* frame of reference significantly dictated the way he weighed the seriousness of his actions. If he were to “hear” Bloomer, he would feel the pain and terror of what it means to be Black in America. But like the New York police officers in Eric Garner’s case, Adell avoided that pain and terror and simply said, “You’re too sensitive.”

**WHITE FRAME OF REFERENCE**

Whiteness is a product of time. The Black body has been framed through white ontological assumptions about Black bodies. The media is one of the most influential forces for creating and establishing these assumptions. Eric Garner was crying out that he could not breathe, as he felt his spirit — his breath — slipping away. However, maybe for the white police officer, the Black body did not have a spirit. Perhaps his cries were judged as deceptive. They may have thought he was going to trick them, then leverage an opportunity to overpower the white police officers. They did not trust his tears or his cries for help. Why should they listen to the cries of a Black body, when for the longest time, they saw it to be devoid of value? What is it about the Black male body crying out for help that blocks a sympathetic response? What is it about a Black male body saying, “you are offending me” that shuts off the ear of a white CEO?

The Black body is made out of thousands of white racist details, anecdotes and stories. It is in these stories that the skin of the Black
body constituted the site of otherness within the framework of a deeper historically-embedded axiological racial divide.

According to Judith Butler, “racism pervades white perception, structuring what can and cannot appear within the horizon of white perception.” From the white police officers’ perceptions, the problem is they already see a Black body and “know” how it would respond in advance, despite the lack of rational proof to conclude such matters.

Since he did not get that he did anything wrong, we see that disrespecting the Black body was something that did not cross the white perception.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 64

Racism decided what Adell found as funny. It also dictated what can and cannot appear on the horizon of his perception. Since he did not get that he did anything wrong, we see that disrespecting the Black body was something that did not cross the white perception. The racial production of what is hearable and worthy of response is based on what they can see. In the same way that the police officers did not “hear” a Black man crying out for help and dying in their hands, Adell did not “hear” that he offended Bishop Bloomer. He simply did not “hear” it.

THE MOST SEGREGATED HOUR

It has been said numerous times, 11:00 AM on Sundays is the most segregated hour in America, because Black and white people like to go to church with people like themselves. White racism has forced Black Christians to establish their own churches. One of the significant differences between most Black and white Christians is
how Black Christians support the necessity of structural changes, including legislation, tearing down systems and structures that continue to impede Black people in American life. On the other hand, white evangelicals are strongly opposed to these measures.37

**Ultimately, white Americans have the burden of responsibility in breaking down structures of racism and building a new unity.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 65*

Ultimately, white Americans have the burden of responsibility in breaking down structures of racism and building a new unity. There is a growing tendency to attribute racial inequality to motivational individualism. One’s right is violated for the benefit and convenience of another. As long as there is no sense of community, as the beloved community which Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about, then there would always be prejudiced behavior and victims of racism.

**THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE BLACK BOY**

Black boys endure stereotypes from learning institutions, whether it is in the private or public school settings, pertaining to their inadequacy or their troublesome behavior. Just because of the color of their skin, the Black boy is automatically, academically poor or a juvenile delinquent. These deficit-based narratives are fueled by historical racist and sexist prejudices. They usually paint the Black boys to be deviant, disengaged, disruptive, undisciplined, unintelligent, problematic, confrontational, threatening, and difficult to teach.38 All of the judgments and conclusions are sadly
coming from an institution that is intended to shape young minds and develop them to their best potential.

**Teacher bias plays a huge role in how Black boys receive discipline in comparison to their white peers, as well as how they are assessed in the classroom.**

*America's Original Sin Principle No. 66*

Racial and gender stereotypes strengthen the educational plight of Black boys and negatively influence the focus of teacher expectations, pedagogy, curricula, and institutional culture. Teacher bias plays a huge role in how Black boys receive discipline in comparison to their white peers, as well as how they are assessed in the classroom. Amidst these disturbing realities, these Black boys grew up to be Black preachers, sharing the Word of the Lord on TV. Despite the challenges that most Black children experience from racially-influenced teachers, they are still able to rise above it and become productive citizens of the country.

In this context, the way Kevin Adell treated Bishop Bloomer and the other preachers by sharing and laughing at the racist meme is uncalled for and ignorant of what Black boys experience all throughout their lives. To be portrayed as a “hoe” and as a dwarf slave dismisses the success and resilience of these Black clergy. These Black preachers already endured so much in their lives, and to be in a vocation that speaks hope and resilience to viewers is inspiring.

**Teachers expect challenging behaviors from Black preschoolers, especially Black boys.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 67*
Kevin Adell thought Bishop Bloomer was overreacting. But from the perspective of the life that comes with being a Black male in America, it can be said that Bishop Bloomer underreacted. Black boys are expelled at a disproportionate rate in the country. Teachers expect challenging behaviors from Black preschoolers, especially Black boys. It is not a wonder that as teenagers, Black youth express frustration with their schools and cite racism as a major struggle. As adults in a religious network, this is the last behavior you would expect from your CEO.

It’s not Adell’s fault that America has a history of racism. It’s not his fault that the education systems would automatically tag Black boys to be dumb, troublesome, or difficult to teach. It’s not his fault that the white gaze exists. However, it’s his lack of awareness and sensitivity to the history and experiences of people that is deplorable. It’s his inability to see his errors. It’s in his refusal to apologize.

These Black clergy need the respect they deserve from the kind of life they are able to live despite the hardships and prejudice that were stacked up against them as Black boys.

*America's Original Sin Principle No. 68*

For a Black male to be in a position that Bishop Bloomer is in, together with his fellow Black preachers, is an achievement that is even greater than any white CEO can achieve in the context of white privilege. These Black clergy need the respect they deserve from the kind of life they were able to live despite the hardships and prejudice that were stacked up against them as Black boys. As Christian leaders and clergy, we must confront, dismantle and reframe the conversation in the different institutions in the country from the problem “with” Black boys and men to the historical problem related
to the stigmatizing and racialized practices and perceptions that deprive Black people fairness and quality of life.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN PORTRAYALS ON TELEVISION

In a study that measured the perceptions of African-American portrayals on television in terms of occupational roles, negative personality characteristics, low achieving status, and positive stereotypes, television viewers saw the occupational roles and personality characteristics that African-Americans portray on television as real or true to life. Conversely, they do not view low-achieving roles and positive stereotypes of African-Americans on TV to be accurate. These findings supported past studies that suggested that TV shows impacted the way viewers see African-Americans in general.40

Most of the time, African-Americans are depicted in service or blue-collar jobs, such as house cleaners or postal workers. The media often portrayed them in roles such as the servant, the crook, cook, entertainer, musician, sad non-white person, athlete, or corrupt individual. Seldom do you find African-Americans playing professional or supervisory positions, in comparison to white television characters.

African-Americans are also frequently portrayed to be stereotypically negative. Most television portrayals show Blacks to be inferior, stupid, comical, immoral, and dishonest. Moreover, other stereotypes include being disrespectful, violent, greedy, ignorant, and power-driven. Blacks in the media are usually portrayed as menacing, untidy, rebellious, disrespectful, buffoonish, sexual, immoral, hopeless, untrained, uneducated, and noisy, showing how most roles Blacks portrayed are negative and stereotypical.
According to Punyanunt-Carter, the cultivation theory serves as an explanation for how individuals have the power to construct social reality and make social judgments of the world, which becomes our perceptions of reality. These perceptions are cultivated or developed by what we view from TV shows. Thus, the way African-Americans are conveyed to people through these TV shows influenced how the general public sees them.⁴¹
CHAPTER 9

WHEN MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS IS APATHY

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.

Isaiah 1:17 ESV

IDIOS KOSMOS

The African-American would live in the conversation of “mind your own business.” Such is called an idiot, coming from the Greek word “idios,” which means “own” or “private” or being a “private citizen.” The Greek phrase, idios kosmos means “private world.” It is the opposite of koinos kosmos, which conversely means “shared world.” In the middle of the controversy between The
Word Network CEO Kevin Adell and Bishop Bloomer over the discriminating meme he sent out, there are members of the African-American community who are limiting themselves to their private world and minding their own business.

King Solomon said there is a season for everything, and so there is a season to keep quiet and mind your own business, and there is a season for supporting your neighbor. There is a time to keep to yourself, and there is a time to take part in the community. People say what happened between Kevin Adell and George Bloomer is private. However, once the victim of racism cries out, it is no longer personal and becomes a public matter. It is not just an offense against Bishop Bloomer. It becomes an attack on the African-American community.

Let’s not disguise apathy as being peacemakers.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 70

For a time such as this, the African-American clergy must not remain silent and keep their heads down. Let’s not disguise apathy as being peacemakers. It’s about defending the oppressed, especially if the oppressed comes from your community. It’s about standing up for a fellow believer, a brother in the faith.

TO EXIST IS TO CO-EXIST

To experience the sense of belonging to the communities they choose to be a part of is an important facet of human progress and happiness. Metaphysically, the individual is primary, an idios, and communities are secondary. Communities are fundamental because they assist us in reaching our potential. The social bonds of connection are instrumentally esteemed in the fulfillment of
non-social desires and are essential for one’s personal progress. It’s a cliché, but it’s true that no man is an island. If a person thinks only about his private interest, neglecting the need of the community, then breakdowns tend to happen.

PEACEMAKERS VS. APATHETIC

Kevin Adell didn’t grow up where George Bloomer grew up. The segregated neighborhoods and churches in America help contribute to the lack of context that white people have for the plight of African-Americans. When people choose apathy, they choose the easier route. For most people, they do this because it’s simpler to coast through life not agonizing about the difficulty of others who are not closely connected with you. It takes a great deal of effort to know those not like us, to study their history and ask hard questions. Apathy is masked by the question, “Haven’t we all moved past racism now?” People get so used to “our own” or being idios that they fall into the temptation of being partial.

Conversely, Bishop Brandon Porter of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) knows the experience of the Black man in the United States. Why are there people from the same Black community who are also choosing to look the other way? Are we forgetting our history?

Is apathy rooted in simply not caring? Perhaps the root of apathy is that people have forgotten their history. Is there a feeling of superiority over other brothers, which is why one is not going out of one’s way to protest oppression and racism which is staring them in the face?

Is apathy rooted in simply not caring? Perhaps the root of apathy is that people have forgotten their history.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 71
In the 18th century, slavery was one of the darkest times for Africans as they were treated as inferior and were treated as slaves by Europeans and Americans. While they wanted to respond to the gospel, a stumbling block was put in their way. They were told that their only true duty was to submit to their masters.

**APATHY TOWARDS YOUR BROTHERS**

Apathy is indifference or sloth. Apathy is a form of sloth because it is about being too lazy to care. The condition of apathy (inattention, neglect, indifference, drifting) is unlike the other sins. While other sins are deadly, they result from willful engagement in ethical error. Conversely, apathy is just as deadly, perhaps deadlier, because one simply does nothing; one drifts away.

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How can a person guard oneself against apathy, or as Dante in *The Divine Comedy* called it, “sins of insufficient love?” Let’s refer back to the Word of God:

10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. 11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:9-12)
The Hebrew author is not referring to a feeling of love. Instead, he is talking about acts of love, because true love is manifested in actions. It is only when we do something good for another that we can say that we love our brother.

**THE CHOICE TO CARE**

As a country that is plagued by racism and division among Blacks and whites, there is a need to take a stand against modern-day oppression. The harmful teachings of the past still affect our generation. Although white people do not intentionally teach the inferiority of Blacks today, we still see the subtle and not-so-subtle evidence that this mindset still remains.

*It’s only when the oppressor acknowledges the oppressed as equals, no longer subjects of oppression, that there can be true peace in the nation of America.*

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 73*

Allowing Adell’s mindset of superiority and smugness in the face of correction to go on without accountability, only supports racism in the country. Instead of truly achieving peace, people who “mind their own business” simply make sure that this division between whites and Blacks exist. Taking a stand for the dignity of the Blacks means they are treated as equals. It’s only when the oppressor acknowledges the oppressed as equals, no longer subjects of oppression, that there can be true peace in the nation of America.

There is a need to check our hearts and reflect on our own apathy. We must honestly answer the question, “Do I really care?” Furthermore, you must also ask yourself, “Why don’t I care as much
as I should?” Break free from self-absorption and be emphatic towards your neighbor. Such is true not only for our white Americans, but it’s as true for our fellow Black brothers. Such a stand will not only influence our own hearts and souls, but also the Church and our nation.

**FRACTURED COMMUNITY**

According to Greg Mason, studies showed that certain communities of color have felt marginalized over time, causing lower voter turnout rates, and one of the reasons is because of apathy brought about by disenfranchisement.\(^\text{45}\) A lot of times, Black people feel invisible. Unfortunately, they feel neglected and ignored by both white and Black brothers. Racism is described as “the uneven and unfair distribution of power, privilege, land and material goods favoring white people.”\(^\text{46}\) According to this study, people do not need to be white to be racist. Sometimes racist acts come from your own people because the way they see Black people is so rooted in the white gaze that they do not see Blacks any differently than white people do.

*Sometimes racist acts come from your own people because the way they see Black people is so rooted in the white gaze that they do not see Blacks any differently than white people do.*

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 74*

In certain areas, the Black populace is not as tight knit as in other areas. There can be a lack of unity in the Black population sometimes. Thus, a community that lacks cohesion also lacks the political power to truly make changes.
Venice Ervin, president of the Utica/Oneida County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said, “We’re really fractured right now. Until we come together, anything that any of us try to do is going to be really tough because we’re going to have to come together to support each other.” She is talking about her own community, but the same is true for Bishop George Bloomer and COGIC.

**APATHY & TOLERANCE: ENEMIES OF TRUTH**

How long must we tolerate racist behavior from white authorities? People of authority — leaders — must know better. They are the ones who are creating a new future for the people they influence. If it is the leaders who are apathetic or racist, what can we expect for the future of America?

**A relaxed attitude towards racism is the enemy of justice and equality.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 75*

A relaxed attitude towards racism is the enemy of justice and equality. It’s about the refusal to become passionate about one’s beliefs. It’s about the lack of energetic commitment to a cause. For the apathetic, beliefs simply do not mean that much. Being apathetic has become an epidemic, a widespread toxin, in the United States.

The Lord Jesus Christ did warn the church of Laodicea that he was nauseated by their lukewarm (or apathetic) attitude (Rev. 3:14–16). In this day and age, a lot of people are neutral, minding their own business. It’s not really because they want a peaceful life. It’s just pure sloth. It’s about being too lazy to fight for something. In the words of King Solomon: “It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the righteous of justice” (Prov. 18:5).
“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

POWER TRUTH

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Matthew 10:16 ESV

DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS

W.E.B. Du Bois wrote in The Souls of Black Folk, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world, — a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense
of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.\(^{49}\)

Why does it need to be double-consciousness? Why can’t the Black soul be American? Is the American soul only white? A Black person would not bleach his Black soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows his blood has a message to the world.

In the midst of the Kevin Adell controversy with the derogatory meme, specifically with Bishop George Bloomer, it seems that COGIC is ignoring their Black soul that is being attacked and oppressed by The Word Network. Is it an issue of confusion from his double consciousness for Bishop Porter? Du Bois’ words are as true today as they were in the past, “The Nation has not yet found peace from its sins; the freedman has not yet found freedom in his promised land.”\(^{50}\)

“The Nation has not yet found peace from its sins; the freedman has not yet found freedom in his promised land.” – W.E.B. Du Bois

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When we are dealing with unrepentant racist behavior from white authorities, as well as police bias, disparity in education and economic standing, we see that African-Americans are still second class citizens in this country. We experience this to be true because
we allow it to be true. We need to find our voice and speak out, to claim what was supposed to be granted to us decades ago.

Even today, we see the struggle of double-consciousness. African-Americans seem to be living double lives, having double thoughts, double duties, double social classes, giving rise to double words, and double ideals. Such, Du Bois pointed out, tempt the mind to either pretense or revolt, to hypocrisy or radicalism. For African-Americans, such as Bishop Bloomer, to feel his rights and ideals trampled upon, but with the public conscience that is deaf to his righteous appeal. Instead, the reactionary forces, such as prejudice, greed, and revenge are gaining new strength and fresh allies (even from within the Black community). Where can the Black man stand?

20TH CENTURY VS. 21ST CENTURY DISCRIMINATION

Written in 1903, why does Du Bois accurately describes the 21st century American society when it comes to prejudice and inequality? Does it mean that the country has not advanced in terms of racism, and that maybe it only changed its approach? It’s true that African-Americans have a great potential to contribute to society. We have seen and proven this to be true today. However, the white gaze still controls the narrative for the construction of the identity of the African-American. There is also very little effort placed into social reformation that allowed African-American to feel they are equal in value as citizens of the country.

The white gaze still controls the narrative for the construction of the identity of the African-American.

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 77
Such inequality stares at us every day in the way we are treated by the justice system, among other aspects in society. Young Black boys are getting shot on the streets, and the white perpetrators who are doing this are portrayed as threatened or acting in self-defense. The Black body becomes responsible for his own murder just by being Black and being perceived as a threat by the white gaze.

There is also very little credit given to Blacks for the white man’s success, which is one of the significant reasons why Blacks are still oppressed in the 21st century. How Adell easily backed out of his deal with four out of five Black clergy when he got what he wanted shows that he does so because he can? Moreover, he has used African-American groups to put pressure on companies he wanted to close deals with, even if he was not really concerned about discriminatory hiring practices in these organizations, as evidenced by not following through on such claims after he closed his deals. From the emancipation from slavery, it seems that African-Americans are poorly defending the freedom that legislation awarded to them. White authority is still disempowering the Black body.

If Du Bois wrote about these conflicts in the 20th century, and we still find them relevant today, how has the nation moved forward in more than 100 years? Why are we still trying to explain to a white TV Network CEO and even to some Black clergy why it is wrong to share discriminatory images and to find it funny? It’s saddest when our fellow Black preachers want to look the other way. Have they just resigned themselves to being second-class citizens?

**Being a peacemaker is about making sure the oppressed are supported, and not just shut up.**

*America’s Original Sin Principle No. 78*
Being a peacemaker is about making sure the oppressed are supported, and not just shut up. Even Jesus defended the rights of those who were being discriminated against when he stood for the woman who committed adultery (Jn. 8:1-11). He never said to the crowd, “I want to be impartial, I want peace, so I’m not going to say anything.” Jesus was never impartial. He never looked the other way. If there was someone who was erring, he rebuked that person with the Word of God (Mt. 16:23), even when it was his friend.

IT IS YOUR BUSINESS

If your brother or sister is hurting, angry, hungry for food or love, isn’t that your business? Isn’t the “minding your own business” route just an excuse not to be involved, to not participate, and to avoid getting caught in the middle or perhaps judged yourself? The new rule needs to be, if there is something you can do to help, to alleviate the hurt, then you need to do it. For some, it is truly as simple as signing a petition, donating money, calling others for hands-on participation, one way or another.

King Solomon wrote, “Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act” (Prov. 3:27 NIV).

America’s Original Sin Principle No. 79

King Solomon wrote, “Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act” (Prov. 3:27 NIV). Being a believer is not just about avoiding sin; it’s about avoiding complacency. It’s not just about steering clear of the bad; but it’s about seeking out opportunities to do good. If you have a way to help others — to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality — take advantage of it and do good for the world.
SILENCE THE PLANTATION PREACHER

When slavery was still legal in the United States, the Black slaves outnumbered their white masters, 10:1. As a result, the white people felt intimidated. They knew that if there were an uprising, they would be overpowered. As a defensive mechanism, they made some slaves preachers, and gave them a specific message to preach on Sundays. The first message was to obey their earthly master, as it was commanded in the Bible. The next message was about Lazarus, the poor man that begged at the rich man’s gate. When Lazarus died, he went to heaven, while the rich man died and went to Hell. The plantation preachers encouraged the slaves to endure suffering here on earth, because they would eventually experience prosperity and riches when they die.

Let’s stop preaching this content in the 21st century to the Black community. While it is true that these messages are in the Bible, let us not use the Word of God to serve white privilege and to oppress the weak. Jesus promised, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (Jn. 10:10). He was speaking about this life. The Lord intended every believer to experience a full life here on earth and beyond. Eternity started the moment they accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Unfortunately, 21st century plantation preachers are still bringing forth the same message in order to keep the African-American people submissive and passive, with no sense of urgency to claim the freedom that they have not only in Christ, but also by the law. While these preachers highlight the message of longsuffering, they have neglected to speak about the freedom from oppression that Jesus died on the cross for us to live. The abundance and freedom we have in the Lord is not “to be claimed” in heaven. Jesus intended for us to live out our purpose and destiny while we are still here on Earth.
NOTES


12 Solomon and Flore “Building Trust”, p. 132-133.


14 Grant, “A Network’s Tactic.”


16 Hedges and Sacco, p. 218-219.


23 Martin, “From Negro to Black,” p. 91.


26 Smiley and Fakunle, “From brute to thug”.


29 Litwack, “Hellhounds,” 123.

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