



A POST TRAYVON WORSHIP EXPERIENCE FOR THE FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

by Charles B. Cotton, Jr. and Courtney Savali L. Andrews

Recently we saw the arrest of George Zimmerman, who killed teenager Trayvon Martin. Many of our church, community, and civil rights leaders participated in calls to action, marches, and rallies for justice to be served on behalf of Trayvon Martin. As we await the trial and verdict by our justice system, we must continue in the fight for social justice for all of humanity.

We must take action in our churches and communities. Trayvon Martin's death will be in vain if our community does not stand up and utilize his death as a clarion realization that there is much justice work still to do. ***It is time to begin anew the fight for the rights of humanity.*** Trayvon Martin was African American, but we must fight not only for our people—we must fight for humanity. We must stand up for the rights of blacks, whites, Latinos/a, Asians, Jews, Muslims, Christians, homosexuals, heterosexuals, the homeless, the less fortunate, the person with HIV/AIDS, and the person who has been left on the skid row of life. Malcolm X said in his speech titled *The Ballot or the Bullet*, “Human rights are something you were born with. Human rights are your God-given rights. Human rights are the rights that are recognized by all nations of this earth. And any time anyone violates your human rights, you can take them to the world court.”

As we continue to fight for human rights, ***we must educate our congregations and communities on our past, present, and our future.*** It is of utmost importance that we connect our past struggles with our present challenges. Martin, Malcolm, Rosa, and so many others did not die without leaving us a rich legacy of advocacy and personal involvement that comes with a high price. Today, we are the beneficiaries of the

yeoman's work of our ancestors, who marched, participated in sit ins, and endured violent acts of hatred to gain for us the civil rights and equality we now possess.



Accordingly, we must take current events and explain to this generation the need for social advocacy. We need to educate youth and young adults about what it means to present themselves to a world that still judges people by the color of their skin, the clothes that they wear, the language that they communicate, and even their non-verbal actions. Here, the words of Reverend Dr. Lance Watson are timely, "Everyone who wears a hoodie is not a criminal and everyone who wears a suit is not a saint." We must teach communities not to allow the idiosyncrasies of others to define who we are.

Finally, *we must continue to pray*. The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17, "See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing." We must pray that justice will be claimed for all persons. We must pray that equal human rights will be granted to all people, no matter their color, creed, religion, or sexual preference.

Since our churches are spaces of worship and liberation planning, we have prepared this "Post Trayvon Worship Experience for the Fight for Human Rights" in an effort to provide a relevant liturgy for a time such as this.

Churches across America stood together in solidarity to stand up for the human rights of a young African American male who was senselessly killed. This worship service is designed for those who will use worship as one mechanism to continue to fight for the rights of humanity. In the present and future, we must seek the hand of God to equip our minds, bodies, and souls for the work that our hands must do.



1. The Litany for Worship/Call to Worship

How the Community Longs for a Sign

Minister: How the community longs for a sign of God's rule on earth!

Congregation: Visit us, O God, in the community where we gather to comfort each other.

Minister: We wait for what many cannot understand.

Congregation: Grant us the opportunity to see, feel, and experience your miraculous power.

Minister: Some are not able to make it on their own.

Congregation: Stir up compassion among us, so that those who are crowded out and easily overlooked may now find room.

Minister: Face to face with our predicaments, let us find favor in you.

Congregation: Heal us, Emmanuel! Set us free to witness to your presence to those who do not understand and cannot appreciate what is happening.

Minister: Prevent us from showing hostility and indifference to those who have not had our unique experience.

All: Create in us a sense of hospitality that others may feel welcomed just as they are and eventually receive their healing.

2. Hymns and Congregational Songs

(a) Battle Hymn of the Republic. By Julia W. Howe

(b) Lift Every Voice and Sing. By James W. Johnson. Tune, (ANTHEM), by J. Rosamund Johnson

(c) Here Am I. By Nolan Williams, Jr.

(d) Hymn for Social Justice. By Charles B. Cotton, Jr. and Nolan Williams, Jr. Tune, (FAITHFULNESS), by William M. Runyan

Hymn for Social Justice

Lord, help us fight for the poor and the needy.
Agents of justice You've called us to be.
Fill us with courage to stand in the margins
Calling for action where we see the need.

Lord, help us pray for the wounded and hurting.

Keen intercessors You've raised us to be.
Give us compassion for those so deserving
Praying for healing unceasingly.

Lord, please unite us in body and spirit
Servants for others You've charged us to be
Endow us with wisdom to move by Your Spirit
Advancing Your Kingdom in service to Thee.

Refrain:
Fill us with courage
Give us compassion
As we serve others by living for thee
Calling for action; unite us in spirit
Servants for others You've charged us to be.

3. Traditional Gospel Selections

(a) I Am on the Battlefield for My Lord. By Sylvana Bell and E. V. Banks. Tune, (BATTLEFIELD), arr. by Joseph Jourbert

(b) Battlefield. By Norman Hutchins
YouTube: <http://youtu.be/GW9ejLoHw54>

(c) We've Come This Far by Faith. By Albert A. Goodson

(d) May the Work I've Done Speak for Me. By Sullivan Pugh. Arr. by Collin Lett

4. Worship through Dance

(a) It Ain't Over. By Anthony Jamar Brown
YouTube: <http://youtu.be/5ok0eVURGQE>

(b) I Pray. By Mariah Carey and Scott Kenneth Crouch
YouTube: <http://youtu.be/qpCUzWfjOA>

5. Hymns of Meditation

(a) Run Til I Finish. By W. Ray Norful
YouTube: <http://youtu.be/zYHNlSkMQPA>

(b) Others. By Meleasa Houghton
YouTube: <http://youtu.be/zYHNlSkMQPA>

(c) Lead Me, Guide Me. By Doris M. Akers

6. A Prayer of Commitment for Human Rights

By Raimundo César Barreto, Jr.

Eternal God, we acknowledge, with thankfulness
your creation of human beings in your own image
and the requirement you place on us
to respect the dignity and integrity of all people.
Since without you, we can do nothing,
let your Holy Spirit empower and enable us
to work for life and justice as long as we live.
In obedience and faithfulness to you,
we commit ourselves today
to resist all types of evil that assault so many lives in your world.
As followers of Jesus Christ, we pledge to be agents of life
who actively oppose the powers of death
manifest in situations of urban and rural violence,
war, genocide, and human trafficking,
abuses against women and children,
economic and sexual exploitation,
racial discrimination and religious intolerance.
We commit to so respond to your presence in our lives
that our cowardice may be turned into boldness,
our egotism into solidarity,
our fear into hope,
and our weakness into strength.
With your help, we will courageously serve
as agents of your kingdom of freedom,
justice, love and peace.
In this, may your grace and mercy be always attend our efforts,
We pray, in Jesus' name.
Amen!

7. Benediction. Author Unknown

May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships
So that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
So that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears
to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war,

So that you may reach out your hand to comfort and
to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
So that you can do what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Cites and Additional Information for Music and Materials Listed

1. The Litany for Worship/Call to Worship—How the Community Longs for a Sign.

Location:

Davis, Valerie Bridgeman and Safiyah Fosua, assoc. eds. The Africana Worship Book: Year B. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2007, p. 83. Used with permission.

2. Hymns and Congregational Songs

(a) Battle Hymn of the Republic. By Julia W. Howe

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #490

African Methodist Episcopal Church. African Methodist Episcopal Church Bicentennial Hymnal. Nashville, TN: African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1981. #572

National Baptist Publishing Board. The New National Baptist Hymnal. Nashville, TN: National Baptist Pub. Board, 1981. #475

Church of God in Christ. Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ Pub. Board in association with the Benson Co., 1982. #502

(b) Lift Every Voice and Sing. By James W. Johnson. Tune, (ANTHEM), by J. Rosamund Johnson

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #540

African Methodist Bicentennial Hymnal. #571

The New National Baptist Hymnal. #477

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #506

(c) Here Am I. By Nolan Williams, Jr.

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #466

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #408

(d) Hymn for Social Justice. By Charles B. Cotton, Jr. and Nolan Williams, Jr. Tune, (FAITHFULNESS), by William M. Runyan

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #158

African Methodist Bicentennial Hymnal. #84

The New National Baptist Hymnal. #153

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #122

3. Traditional Gospel Selections

(a) I Am on the Battlefield for My Lord. By Sylvana Bell and E. V. Banks. Tune, (BATTLEFIELD), arr. by Joseph Jourbert

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #480

African Methodist Bicentennial Hymnal. #390

The New National Baptist Hymnal. #493

(b) Battlefield. By Norman Hutchins

Location:

Battlefield. Columbia, SC: JDI Records, 2001.

(c) We've Come This Far by Faith. By Albert A. Goodson

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #412

The New National Baptist Hymnal. #222

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #395

(d) May the Work I've Done Speak for Me. By Sullivan Pugh. Arr. by Collin Lett

Location:

Abbington, James, ed. How Excellent Is Thy Name Collection of the African American Church Music Series. #G-6417. Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc. 2004.

4. Worship through Dance

(a) It Ain't Over. By Anthony Jamar Brown

Location:

Clark, Maurette Brown. The Dream. Nashville, TN: Atlanta International, 2007.

NTIME MUSIC COMPANY

4913 Albemarle Road #103
Charlotte, NC 28205
Phone: 704-531-8961

Online location: www.ntimemusic.com

(b) I Pray. By Mariah Carey and Scott Kenneth Crouch

Location:

WOW Gospel. WOW Gospel 2006. New York, NY: Verity Records, 2006.

NTIME MUSIC COMPANY

Phone: 704-531-8961

Online location: www.ntimemusic.com

5. Hymns of Meditation

(a) Run Til I Finish. By W. Ray Norful

Location:

Norful, Smokie. Life Changing. Nashville, TN: EMI (EMI Gospel), 2006.

NTIME MUSIC COMPANY

Phone: 704-531-8961

Online location: www.ntimemusic.com

(b) Others. By Meleasa Houghton

Location:

Houghton, Israel. Love God. Love Others. Mobile, AL: Integrity, 2010.

(c) Lead Me, Guide Me. By Doris M. Akers

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #474

African Methodist Bicentennial Hymnal. #378

The New National Baptist Hymnal. #355

6. A Prayer of Commitment for Human Rights. By Raimundo César Barreto, Jr., for Human Rights Day 2010.

Location:

Online location:

<http://www.bwanet.org/bwa.php?site=Freedom%20And%20Justice&id=57>