



Black America's Religion

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the late Rev. Richard Allen and the late Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad (PBUH)—founders of the two most popular Black American religious traditions; the Black Christian Church and Islam for Black Americans, respectively.

In addition, we dedicate this book to grandchildren and grand nieces and nephews who comprise a portion of the generation that will realize the *CHANGE*: Walter, Xander, Chloe, Brook, Heir, Destiny, K.J., Delin, Justin, Celeste, Sterling, Ciara, and Tamarian.

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Preface: The Third of a Trilogy

Awaken Black Americans! Following *CHOICE: Black America's Decision* and *CHOSEN: Black America's Calling*, this small book, *CHANGE: Black America's Religion*, completes a trilogy. Trilogies are often imbued with significance and complete a topic that is too large to be covered in one book. We hope that this holds true. One thing is for certain, Black American nation formation is a large topic, and will probably require many more books to complete—though not at our hand. However, this trilogy has endeavored to lay a solid framework for future work on this topic.

CHOICE opens the topic by discussing religion (reliving; i.e., joining the legion (ligion) again (re)) and Black American nation formation. In terms of sequence, it seems that *CHANGE* should have been the second in the series because it takes off from *CHOICE* and reflects the need and urgency for Black Americans to form their own religion. This is a logical progression that takes us to *CHOSEN*, which provides a “draft blue-print” for a Black American nation formation process. As things go, we put the cart before the horse by providing *CHOSEN* before *CHANGE*. But this inconsistency can be corrected now as *CHANGE* is here providing clear guidance on religion formation for Black Americans.

The Holy Qur'an says that “Man plans and God plans; God is the best of planners” (*Holy Qur'an, 3:54*). Therefore, we are not so concerned about the arrival order. We comprehend, however, that it was

important to deliver *CHOICE* and *CHOSEN* before *CHANGE* because the former two books enabled us to see more clearly *CHOSEN*'s position and task.

The new millennium is well underway, and Black Americans must get busy with the work that is set before us. If we are to play our ordained roles as peacemakers, negotiators, and problem solvers, then we need to prepare ourselves. We need to free ourselves of the slave bondage mentality that continues to haunt us by forming our own new nation and using the solitude of that nation to heal ourselves. After we are healed, as pointed out in *CHOSEN*, we will be the best qualified to serve the nations of the world with empathy and diplomacy, which will facilitate the predicted millennium-long peace that must come. But in order to form our new nation and heal ourselves, we need our own religion.

In the 1960's Maulana Ron Karenga started us down this path by developing and promulgating *Kwanza*. But we need more than a seven-day festival. We need an old-time and full-time religion that enables us to grow and develop properly and ensure our happiness and well-being.

The fact that the aforementioned books have been written is *prima facie* evidence that the time is near for Black Americans to grow up and make a *CHOICE* about their future. The time is near for Black Americans to recognize themselves as worthy of their own religion and to *CHANGE* from their old religion to their new religion. Finally, the time is near for Black Americans to form their own new nation and help move the world forward in peace because they have

been *CHOSEN* to help usher in and sustain a millennium of peace.

Don't be afraid to read this book. Don't be afraid that you will be enticed away from your religion. If you read the book and are not convinced of the value and worth of its content, then go back to your religion. But make a commitment to move forward with the concepts and precepts that are set forth in this book if you are convinced of their value and worth. These concepts and precepts will lift you up and set your feet on a new mountain rock with a high calling. It will elevate your mind and spirit beyond their former states, and bring a sense of peace and joy to your soul in a way that you have never experienced before. This book will help you comprehend who you are, what your role is in the world and in the hereafter, and it will help bring you greater happiness and well-being.

Foreword: No Prosperity Without the Right Religion

Prosperity, real prosperity, cannot occur in one's life until one has life ordered properly. One must have the correct perspective about oneself, about one's family, about one's community, etc. In other words, if one's life is ordered properly, then one has a way of life that is properly ordered.

One can define religion to mean a path or a way of life that leads to another life—a way of reliving. Prosperity means enjoying life—consuming and partaking in the things of life. To enjoy prosperity, one must continue living. One level of prosperity is to enjoy living this life. True, real, prosperity is the power and authority to enjoy this life and the next. Therefore, in order to experience true prosperity, one must have a good religion—the right religion—that provides a guaranteed path to a favorable next life.

The problem for Black Americans is that we have the wrong religion. Our concept of god is flawed. Our theology is flawed. Our cosmogony and cosmology are flawed. Our understanding of the hierarchy of life is flawed.

The religion that most Black Americans adhere to was not designed for us. The previous statement is different from saying that the book on which a religion is based is the wrong book. The *Holy Bible* is not necessarily a bad book—in and of itself. The *Holy Bible* has many great lessons for Black Americans. In fact, we have contended elsewhere that the *Holy Bible*, even the traditional cover itself (black), was

meant as a sign or symbol for Black Americans that the book would be useful to us.

Although the *Holy Bible* might be good for Black Americans, the religion, Christianity, is not good for Black Americans. Its traditional White Jesus is not the right symbol of god for Black Americans. How can you really trust and rely on a god that does not look like your father, grandfather, or your ancestors. Even if you convince yourself that you believe in such a god, deep in the recesses of your mind will be the thought that, in a time of crisis and even in no particular time of crisis, that god will save those that look like him before he takes time to save you. In essence, you should be able to fully identify with your god. When you can't, then you are in trouble. In the Western Theology, god is characterized as the great father. You may be fond of thinking of your father god as a White man, but because you know your father is not White, you can't really believe that a White god will treat you like his son and daughter. Yet you have no god of your own that looks like you and your ancestors. Therefore, your faith in god is shallow and incomplete; consequently, your faith produces weak results.

In addition, Christianity has teachings about proper relationships between master and slave. This is precisely the wrong type of image and teaching that you need, given Black Americans' slavery experience. It is this White Jesus, White (as snow) purity, and White master and Black slave relationship that have Black Americans bound in a slavery mentality and brainwashed into hating our own Black selves, into

thinking that we are “not worthy,” and into loving all things White.

We should not forget that the *Holy Qur’an* (16:75), too, has teachings on the role of slaves in society and includes references to the evil of those whose faces are dark (black, *Holy Qur’an* 3:106). While color, in this case, may be allegorical, one must still question why the Qur’an is not different than many other western sources that equate Blackness with evilness.

Given the requirement for Jewishness (birth by a Jewish woman), we cannot naturally be Jewish. This is true today because current-day Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews are of European and Middle-Eastern origin, respectively. Unarguably, the original Hebrews were a dark complexioned people who were derivatives of Africa (Semite meaning part black and part white). Under the old tradition, then, Black Americans could, theoretically, be Hebrew.

Black Americans cannot naturally be Hindu, although conversion is possible. Ideally, in the Hindu tradition, one is born Hindu. It is interesting, however, how the Hindu tradition includes stories of Lord Krishna, who is illustrated as a blue man—reminiscent of the blue-black Africans of East Africa. Without question, Hindus of Dravidian origin are Black people.

Black Americans could, theoretically, be Buddhist because there are images of the Buddha that reflect a dark complexioned man with thick curly hair, a flat nose, and thick lips. Besides, Buddhism advocates following the Middle Path, which simply means be moderate in all of one’s practices. However, many

Buddhist today have evolved the religion into a highly esoteric form. Black Americans are experiencing very much day-to-day, on-the-ground, types of issues. We must address these issues pragmatically. Therefore, today's esoteric form of Buddhism may not be a good fit for us. Traditional forms of Buddhism may apply.

This is not to say that we can't take the good from all of these religions as we formulate our own religion. If we agree that the religions that Black Americans have today are not a perfect match for us, then how should our religion be fashioned? We believe that our religion should have the following operational characteristic.

- It should feature a Supreme Being (God) with which Black Americans can identify (God is a spirit and those that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth: *Holy Bible, St. John, 4:24*), and not be represented in anyway by a human form.
- It should have a cosmogony and cosmology that places Black people at the beginning of time.
- It should feature men and women as gods on Earth. (He breathed into our nostrils the breath of life and we became living gods (*Holy Bible, Genesis: 2:7*); we have the power to have dominion over all earthly things; we have the power to be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the Earth; and we have the power to preserve and keep our God-given Earth (*Holy Bible, Genesis 1:26-28*).
- It should teach that the mind is the most powerful instrument in the universe. First the

mind conceives, the tongue speaks, and then “being” occurs. Positive thoughts produce positive outcomes, while negative thoughts produce negative outcomes.

- It should place the utmost value on initiating, nurturing, growing, and preserving families.
- It should place the utmost value on self-love and the love of family, friends, and kin.
- It should have a treasured position for ancestors who precede us in this world and in the hereafter. The key to our advancement is with them, because they alone care enough about us enough to take us forward into the next world.
- It should place the utmost value on human effort of all productive types.
- It should be devoid of hierarchy by divine right.
- It should place great value on meritorious advancement.
- It should place great value on kindness and generosity.
- It should place the next life in the proper context and emphasize that one may experience “heaven” and “hell” during life on Earth.

You may have other requirements for a religion that Black Americans should adhere to. We welcome your additions. We should take this challenge seriously, design our religion to guarantee our success in this life and in the hereafter, and construct a literature and ceremonies that are consistent with our religion and that will reinforce it. We, Black Americans, have as much right as any other group to develop our own

religion—nay, we have a duty and authority to, and must, develop our own religion.

A priori, you may think that this is a wild idea. However, 2,010 years ago, setting aside the divinity of Jesus, do you think that Jesus thought that the world would be filled with over two billion Christians today? When the thirteen colonies first set out to form the United States, did they imagine a nation of over 300 million 234 years later? We must begin somewhere and wisely shape our history in advance. For our own good, for the protection and security of our children, and for the prosperity of our posterity we must construct a religion for us by us.

Chapter 1: Introduction

If you sit up in church on Sunday morning and don't feel quite at ease, then this book is for you. If you have a sneaking suspicion that something is not quite correct about your religion, then this book is for you. And if you are looking for a very challenging undertaking that may not have much fruit initially, but that may lodge you in the annals of history, then you need to read this book and take on the task of helping Black Americans to *CHANGE* our religion and to formulate a religion that is ideal for us.

During the mid-1990s, we remember sitting in a class being taught by a great conservative economist who will remain nameless here. We were shocked when he inquired: "Is there a connection between religion/theology and economics?" We had never thought about that question other than to recognize that we always placed money in the collection plate when we attended church. But that was too simplistic an answer and we were afraid to offer it up. It seemed that none of the students had ever considered the question. The professor held us in suspense for the longest pause—waiting to see if anyone could solve this simple riddle. Finally he said, "I see that you all have never read the Bible. Or it could be that you have never interpreted the Bible properly. Do you remember the first commandment? God said, 'Have no other God before me (*Holy Bible, Exodus 20:3*),' which means that God was a monopolist!" With that, we were initiated into the economics of religion.

We had taken a couple of Bible courses as an undergraduate, and had even contemplated joining the ministry. But after the experience with the aforementioned professor, we began to ponder the real relationship between religion and economics, given that we went on to obtain a doctoral degree in economics. One might say that we developed a jaundiced eye toward religion thereafter; seeing it more as a business than as a mechanism for realizing spiritual enlightenment. But there was a nagging question that kept seeking an answer. “How can a religion result in such positive outcomes for one set of worshipers, yet produce such a negative set of outcomes for a second set of worshipers? Wasn’t the same God providing oversight for both groups?”

Ultimately, from study and a variety of experiences, we concluded that the key to the variance in outcomes could be linked back to the appropriateness of the religion for the two groups. In this case, Christianity seems to produce very favorable outcomes for White Americans, but not so favorable outcomes for Black Americans. The big difference between the two groups vis-à-vis the religion is that Whites (Europeans) developed Christianity so that it would produce favorable outcomes for themselves—mainly at the expense of other races. At the same time, Black Americans are worshiping in a religion that was not created by them, and which was designed to make them subservient to those who created the religion.

We will discuss some of Christianity’s theological conflicts for Black Americans in this book, but we will mainly focus on how Black Americans have allowed

Christianity to become a huge problem for them. Don't get us wrong; Christianity can, and does, produce certain very favorable outcomes. Back in the 1970s, as an undergraduate taking religion courses, we wrote a term paper extolling the virtues of Catholicism as "the best religion for Black Americans" because of effective parochial schools, and its fraternal and charitable organizations and societies. The efficacy of Catholicism as a religion for Black Americans may remain today. Yet it and no other Christian religion can provide the benefits and the returns that can come from a religion that is uniquely designed for Black Americans.

There is really nothing more pressing for Black Americans than religion. A 2009 Pew Charitable Trust report indicates that Black Americans remain the most religious subgroup in the United States.¹ We are a superstitious people who allow religion to consume our lives. Therefore our lives are out of balance, and our lives produce unbalanced outcomes.

This book is designed to help Black Americans identify the reasons why our lives are not as prosperous as we desire for them to be. It comes in four parts. First, it provides an answer to the question, "Why Black Americans need a new religion." Second, it critiques the core of Black America's religion—the Black church—and reveals the good, the bad, and the ugly about this revered institution. Third,

¹ See N. Sahgal and G. Smith's *A Religious Portrait of African-Americans*, which was published by the Pew Charitable Trust in 2009; <http://www.pewforum.org/docs/?DOCID=389#a>).

it opens the discussion concerning how a new religion for Black Americans should be shaped—providing multifaceted considerations. The final chapter that is entitled “Working a Paradigm for Change” provides interesting insights into why we have not been more successful as a people, how a new religion will make us more successful in the future, and on how we should view our ultimate destination.

Believe it or not, Black Americans are ordained to perform important functions in the world during the current millennium. We have discussed these duties and responsibilities in earlier works. As mentioned in the Preface, this is the third book of a trilogy that seeks to move Black Americans toward nation formation. As you know from your Christian religious teachings, it is improper to pour new wine into old skins (*Holy Bible, St. Matthew 9:17*). By analogy, it would be unfortunate if Black Americans formed a new nation, but then entered that nation using an old and inappropriate, and yes harmful, religion.

Black Americans, we believe, will make the correct *CHOICE* and form a new nation because they are the *CHOSEN*. However, in order to achieve these outcomes, they must *CHANGE* and formulate a new religion for themselves that will guarantee their safety, security, well-being, happiness, and prosperity.

Chapter 2: Why Black Americans Need a New Religion

Why do Black Americans need a new religion? The well-known saying is, “If it ain’t broke, then don’t fix it.” If Black America’s religion wasn’t broke, we would not be asking this question. Consequently, when we consider the facts, then we must conclude that Black America’s religion is broken—if not for those who have been fortunate to capture the good life, then definitely for those who dwell in poverty. So let us begin by convincing you that Black America’s religion does not work properly—it is broken. We will attempt to accomplish this by elaborating on what a good religion should do, or at least help adherents accomplish. After delineating the failings of Black America’s religion, we believe that you will agree that Black America’s religion is broken and requires fixing; i.e., replacing.

What Should a Religion Do?

At a minimum, a good religion does the following:

1. It establishes an organized hierarchy of beings from the lowest to the most-high God.
2. It explains how the current existence came to be, and defines adherents’ roles in that existence; i.e., it gives adherents a self-concept.
3. It provides meaning for life itself.

4. It enables adherents to achieve their desires, which are contextualized by their religious framework.
5. It provides guidance for the smooth functioning of the society that adherents must shape.
6. It provides advice and counsel on how to respond in favorable and in unfavorable times.
7. It provides insights about conditions that adherent should expect to encounter after the current life ends.

In other words, a good religion establishes, explains, enables, and provides for our mental, spiritual, and physical needs. Take a moment and ask yourself, especially if you are Christian: “Does my religion fulfill these requirements?” You don’t have to answer the question just yet. Let us continue with the analysis.

Some of the requirements that are outlined above can be satisfied in a very general way. For example, very few newborns can explain from whence they came, and we have had very few persons to go forward to the other side only to return and detail for us what it is really like in the existence beyond this existence. While a good religion may provide some guidance on conditions in the pre- and post-life, given the uncertainty about these phases of life, most of us, when we really get serious about these types of questions, feel comfortable thinking these issues through and coming to our own conclusions. Of course, those conclusions usually are parameterized by what we have learned from our religion or from other religions. But the fact remains that we come into this world alone, and we shall leave it alone. Therefore, logical-thinking and sensible adults should

be strong enough to come to terms with methods for handling what comes next based on their own prayer, meditation, and research. In part, we know that when we came to this life, we brought little with us in our conscious, and somehow we have made it thus far. Therefore, we should not be too fearful; knowing that, likewise, we will be able to respond to challenges on the other side using whatever is available there with which to respond.

On the other hand, in the here and now, humans face specific issues in life for which religion should provide guidance: Good practices for relating to our fellow human beings; how best to care for our health; and how our life should develop through the stages of youth, maturity, adulthood, old age, and death. When a religion provides guidance on these fronts, it takes a lot of the guess-work out of life, and reduces substantially the uncertainty. Such guidance gives us a sense of confidence and certainty about success that goes a long way in making life truly livable. Imagine what a nightmare it would be if there was no guidance on the many aspects of our lives.

Not only should a good religion provide such specific guidance, it should provide verifiable truths about what happens when one does or does not adhere to this guidance. Once you know the truth, then you can be free—to accept or reject the truth, but being fully informed of the consequences. A religion that provides truthful guidance is a guarantor of success. It tells you in no uncertain terms what you can expect when you perform certain acts. Consequently, knowing these facts/truths, you can be certain to be

successful in achieving desired outcomes by adhering to the truth.

A good religion empowers. If a religion provides a favorable self-concept and guidance on specific aspects of life, then adherents who are invested in the religion and comply with its teachings are well on their way to experiencing happy and secure lives. This formula enables adherents to gain and maintain control of their lives and their environment.

A good religion should work for its adherents—adherents should not have to work for the religion. That is, when one practices the religion perfectly, one should obtain what one expects to obtain. This becomes a self-reinforcing process if the self-concept that the religion provides is one of humans being as direct extensions of the Supreme Being—i.e., gods on earth. The Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions begin with this idea by placing a perfect Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with god-like powers. However, given certain acts by Adam and Eve, perfection falls apart. A good religion, in our view, would not include a god that curses his creation for going awry. A good religion, like a good chemist, always has an antidote. If things go awry, there must be a fix. The religion is designed to produce the best possible state and not keep adherents in a state of perpetual imperfection. So the world continues to seek the antidote to return human kind to perfection. Maybe the antidote is a religion that undoes the misperceptions that are embodied in current religions. Maybe it's as simple as coming to the realization that we are worthy of possessing god-like power and that we are on a quest of relearning how to capture those powers. On the

other hand, it may be as simple as understanding that man is, and was always, a plain simple man; that he did not sin and fall from grace; and that he must always live with imperfections. The latter is not such a horrific outcome; but it creates great anguish given religious myths that characterized man as once perfect. We continue to seek that which may not be possible. Wouldn't it be great if someone found the "undo key," and provided a religion that presents a purely truthful framework in which humans can live?

In fact, religion is not broken for a chosen few—few in the context of the total nation's population. Mainly wealthy European Americans have benefited from their religion and have positioned themselves so that they have god-like powers. They have sufficient resources such that they speak "be" and it comes to pass. What is their religion? Their religion is derived from the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has a god that looks just like them. They feel and believe that they are fully empowered because they say that they are truly "children of the king." They are convinced that Jesus is White, that his father God is also White, and that because they are White, they have access to the divine. In other words, White Supremacy or White Nationalism is their religion, and they live and work accordingly. These wealthy individuals have perfected their religion, and it establishes, explains, enables, and provides for their every mental, spiritual, and physical need. The religion of White Supremacy/White Nationalism justifies every act of its adherents to maintain their god-like power and authority. In adherents' views, they have a divine right to execute such acts.

Now compare your religion to the religion of the wealthy—White Supremacy/White Nationalism. Is your religion as effective as White Supremacy/White Nationalism? Does it provide you with god-like power? Does it establish, explain, enable, and provide for your needs? Is your religion broken?

A good religion is enticing and compelling—not because of spookiness and superstition, but because the fundamental principles of the religion work for the believers. If you believe, truly believe, that you are righteous and directly connected to the divine (he looks just like you), then your faith in your god and in yourself becomes exceedingly strong. That faith empowers you to take all necessary action to be successful: From believing that you are qualified to solve the most simple to the most complex of problems; to believing that you can produce and sell products all around the world; to believing that you are more worthy and more powerful than any other people on the face of the earth; to believing that the divine is on your side and that you cannot lose any battles—unless you decide of your own accord to lose such battles. It is this type of White Supremacy/White Nationalist mentality that has enabled Europeans to conquer, at one point, most of the world.

As a Black American, you say that you would not like to conquer the entire world. That is because you possess a slave and victim mentality. Think about the god that you believe in. He is omniscient and omnipotent. Yet, you believe that your god is benevolent and merciful. Wouldn't you like to be like your god? In your church you sing the song that you want to be "more and more like Jesus." According to

the New Testament, Jesus is the son of God and is with God. Then why don't you want to be like God. If you said that you didn't want to conquer or control the whole world, then you don't really believe in your religion. Remember, in the end times, Jesus does what? He wrests the world from Satan and consolidates his righteous power all over the Earth (*Holy Bible, Revelations Chapters 19-22*). A "no" answer to conquering/controlling the world is evidence that you don't truly believe in your religion. Why don't you believe your religion? Because your religion was not constructed for you. Your religion was made for Whites by Whites. That is why you don't believe in it completely; that is why you don't adhere to its principles unwaveringly; and that is why your religion doesn't work for you. White Supremacy/White Nationalism is about "preaching the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth." That is, bringing the entire world under the control of Whites.

As previously stated, a good religion should make one free because it should embody truths. We know that when we know the truth, then we shall be set free (*Holy Bible, St. John 8:32*). As Black Americans, there are some truths that we have never fully received. Given our over 400-year sojourn in the wilderness of North America, we have asked for truthful answers to certain very important questions. As the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan pointed out in his Million Man March Speech in October of 1995, we have asked (paraphrasing):

"Why God Why? Why did you let him steal us from the shores of Africa? Why did you let him rape our women and our

boys? Why did you let him work us from sunup to sundown without proper compensation? Why did you let him burn the towns that we built here in America? Why did you let him lynch us? Why did you let him falsely accuse us and send us to prison for a lifetime, and then beg our pardon for making an error?"

These are gut wrenching questions. They bring tears to your eyes and place knots in your throat and stomach. We need answers to these questions, and, if the answers are truthful, then they will set us free.

Before we provide the answer that has been given to the foregoing questions, another question must be asked: "Does your religion give you reasonable answers to the questions?" You might respond that, according to the great Christian theologian and Black Civil Rights Leader Martin Luther King, Jr., "unearned suffering is redemptive."² Okay, that is what he said. But did you ask, "From what did we have to be redeemed?" You may respond that, "We were sinners." But this does not make sense because the Bible also says that Jesus died for your sins; i.e., he redeemed you from your sins. According to the Bible, Jesus died 2000 years ago; therefore, why did your suffering have to redeem you 1600 years later? The fact is that your answer to the question is incorrect.

² Martin Luther King, Jr. uses this quote in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan offers a better, yet partial truthful answer. He said, that the answer that he received from God was, "I allowed you to suffer all of these indignities because you would not be able to appreciate the heights to which I will raise you, if you had not experienced the very lows" (paraphrasing).

There are three additional parts to the answer that we have been seeking. First, God allowed us to be stripped down to nothingness (complete powerlessness) so that he could show that he is God, and that beside him there is no other. How will he do this? You are living proof. God is deliberately remaking the Black American man, woman, and child. He is making something out of nothing. Think how far we have come in the last 145 years. Initially, Black American slaves were made to have no language, culture, history, or religion of their own. They were made empty shells for work alone. Now God is giving us back our language, culture, history, and soon, God willing, we will have our own religion.

Second, as explained in *CHOSEN*, Black Americans' experiences in America taught us to seek peace at all cost, to plead and negotiate for peace, and to learn the fine art of diplomacy. These are all tools that will serve us well in our new role in the current millennium as we help orchestrate and sustain peace for the globe. We are to become those who have the empathy that is required to broker peace between nations and parties at conflict. We are to become the peace-makers and guarantors of peace in the world in order to help fulfill the prophecy of the thousand year reign of peace on earth.

Third, it was the European mind that concocted the most evil and heinous crimes against Black and colored people of the world in order to secure wealth and power. There is a price to pay for evil in God's universe, which is ruled by karmic laws. If you sow seeds of kindness, surely you shall reap beautiful and fragrant flowers of joy. However, if you sow the seeds of violence, hate, and greed, then you are certain to reap painful and poisonous prickly cacti that are devoid of the living water of life itself. In other words, while the Western world may have enjoyed a short harvest of materialism and technology, it must now reap the whirl wind, death, and destruction. There is no way around it. There must be recompense for every theft, every rape, every lash of the whip, every denial of food and comfort, every thwarting of hope for peace. There must be an accounting for each act of evil imposed by the Western world on the colored people of the world, especially Black Americans. It is written in the book of life, and judgment has already begun. God's word is written, it is true, and it must be fulfilled. Black Americans suffered so that history could record the fact that God is not lax in exacting justice from those who perform evil acts.

These three additional answers are reasonable answers. They are answers that we can understand. They tell us that karmic laws are real. They tell us that there is a God who has not forgotten about us, but who has been working for us all along. However, clearly, he cannot be the White god who supported the Whites in their evil acts. So who is this God, and what is his religion?

We'll discuss the God to which we have referred and the related religion in Chapter 4. For the moment, however, we must conclude our analysis, which has proven that your religion is broken, and that you need a new religion. Check that. You do not need a new religion *per se*. What you need is a return to your original religion—the religion of which you were stripped when you were ripped from the shores of Africa.

One final point on this topic is that our ancestors knew from the outset that Christianity, as currently configured, was not the correct religion for us. How do we know this? Because, early on, they embedded songs in the Black Christian tradition that said, "Give me that old time religion." They also sang, "Let us all go back to the old landmark. Let us kneel and pray in the olden way." They knew that it was important for us to keep reminding ourselves that, at the correct time, we should return to our old religion. This book, *CHANGE*, is evidence that the time to return to our religion is now!

Chapter 3: The Black Church: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Introduction

As you know, the ultimate goal of this book is to help define and design a new religion for Black Americans. But before you can be convinced that a new religion is what the doctor ordered, you must be convinced that your current religion has shortcomings. We discuss such shortcomings in the previous chapter in generalities. Now we turn to the focal point and the keystone of your religion—the Black Christian Church.

Undeniably, the Black Christian Church has played an enormously important and essential role in the development of Black Americans. But we all know the popular song and saying that “there is a time and a purpose for everything under heaven.” *CHANGE* is a signal that the time for a major decline of the Black Church as we know it is nearing. You might think that this is impossible. You look around and see that the Black church is growing and “prospering.” But the reality is that many Black churches are a drain on our communities and are “synagogues of satan” (*Holy Bible, Revelation 2:9*). Moreover, the Black Christian Church’s traditional *raison d’être* is being supplanted. Blacks who are the major supporters of the Black church are growing in wealth, and they are finding limited acceptance in the broader society. Consequently, the role of the Black Church as a place to seek greater prosperity and as a provider of

“position” is required decreasingly. It is time that we examine the Black church in an objective light to determine whether, in fact, its demise is logically on the horizon.

As we consider the Black Christian Church, we will give full vent to “The Good.” But we will also give full vent to “The Bad,” and to “The Ugly.” It’s going to get “hot up in here,” so take off your defensive garments and settle yourself in a cool place so that you can hear what thus says one who has prayed and agonized over the Black Christian Church. About some of it, you will say “Amen.” About other aspects you will say, “Lord Jesus, you know, I hate to say it, but that is correct.” About the rest, well watch your tongue; and remember that Christians are not supposed to say certain things.

After the steam has poured out and after you have calmed down, then we believe that you will conclude that this chapter was well worth the read, and that you have some real decisions to make about where you go from here. Be not dismayed, your journey will continue toward that peaceful place of rest. However, the road to that place may change. You’ll be the better for it; as will the remainder of Black America.

The Good

No question about it, the Black Christian Church was a timely invention. Not being historians, we will not try to escort you through the founding of the Black Christian Church by Rev. Richard Allen during the 19th century here in the United States. There are

many good history books that cover this topic. In fact, if you have a background in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, then you likely know the story. So no need to belabor the history here. What we need to see about the founding of the Black Christian Church is that we created it, albeit with the approval of our White masters. The most important word here being “created.” We started it from scratch and built it into its current multi-denominational form. Likewise, we can tear it down and build a new church whenever and however we choose. All we have to do as a people is decide to take a new direction.

Before we leave history completely, it is important that we say just a little about the fastest growing denomination within the Black Christian Church. Back in 1906, as you may know, in an old livery stable in Los Angeles, California on Azusa Street, Rev. William J. Seymour and his compatriots experienced the most powerful religious revival of the 20th Century in the form of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was signified mainly by glossolalia; i.e. speaking in tongues. That Pentecostal movement ultimately came under the roof of the Church of God in Christ and many other Pentecostal denominations and, over time, has swept a large percentage of church-going Black American Christians into the faith. The key word here is “faith.” It took faith to receive the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues; it took faith to fashion the Church of God in Christ and other denominations in the form of Pentecostalism; and it will take faith to realize that we, as a people, can have a new outpouring of guidance and fulfillment that can lead us into the millennium of peace that stands ahead.

One final and important point is worth noting about the Black Christian Church. For a long time, the Black Christian Church had, in effect, a monopoly position. It was the only show in town. Even Voodoo and Root religions were somewhat integrated with Christianity. However, following the Great Depression in the 1930s, we began to see Muhammadanism forming in the United States. The Great Black Leader, the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad (once called the most powerful Black man in America, PBUH), came on the scene and created a duopoly (two sellers): Black Americans were either Christian or Muslim. Since the 1960s, we believe that it is safe to say that Black Americans have fanned out in small numbers to a variety of religious traditions; including Buddhism, Baha'i, Rastafarianism, etc. However, these alternative religions remain small. Therefore, when we talk about Black American religions today, we are mainly talking about Christianity and Islam. As economists, we can assure you that monopolies (one seller) and even duopolies (two sellers) are disadvantageous when it comes to consumers (members). Monopolies and duopolies can play strategic games that make the price of purchasing their products (religion) disadvantageous to consumers. Monopolies and duopolies can be inefficient and exploitative. So just from an economic perspective, scrutiny of this duopoly arrangement is warranted. As we zero in on the main leg of this duopoly (the Black Christian Church) we will identify some of the inefficient and exploitative aspects of its operations. But let us begin by discussing some of the more favorable aspects of the Black Christian Church.

From the very outset, Bishop Richard Allen and his compatriots sought to establish the Black Christian Church because they believed that it could provide a great support network for Black Americans who were under duress in these United States of America. As they formed the church, they emphasized service, providing assistance, and providing information. The informational aspect, however, was a two-edged sword. Not only were Black members of congregations provided with critical information, but so were the White masters who permitted the formation and development of the Black church.

As intelligent people, we should think just a little bit about the fact that the White master would never have allowed the Black church to form had he thought that it would end up producing an unfavorable outcome for him. In fact, the White master knew that the Black church would never prove to be harmful to him because embedded deep within the church and at the core of the church was the White man's God, which he knew would serve as a safety measure for him. Consequently, he allowed the Black church to form.

In doing so, he not only solved his problem of keeping you and me out of his church, which he uses to orchestrate his control over his community and to keep secrets from Black Americans, he also created another formal system for controlling the Black American population—mainly then and now through the Black preacher.

In fact, information gathering and dissemination were, and are, key cornerstones of the Black Christian Church. Obviously, if you want to be independent

and develop and work your own plan, then you must cut off the outward dissemination of what is occurring in the Black Community to the White master—even today. Nevertheless, the Black church is a great information system. It is a way to transmit valuable information to Black Americans about key developments that may be beneficial and harmful to them. The only problem is, in many cases, the pastors of these churches are beholden to the White masters in the towns and cities in which they reside, so they only allow Black Americans to hear just enough to keep them happy, while, on the other hand, the pastor keeps the local White masters fully informed about what is going on in the Black community. The Black preacher is a communicator all right. He gathers information from you and passes it along to his White master. Ask him about the weekly or monthly coffees or breakfasts that he attends and inquire about what he says during those meetings.

But the Black Church is much, much more. One of its most important functions is to serve as a pressure release valve. When you have been beaten down all day for five days in a world where it is difficult to catch up financially, let alone make progress, the pressure builds up. For those “sinners” who don’t go to church, they release their pressure through verbal or physical spousal or child abuse. Alternatively, they may simply drown their sorrows in a case or in a fifth. On the other hand, those who have changed the order of their ways attend service and sing praises to their Lord. Singing alone is a bringing out of the pressurized air that has built up inside of your body during the week. You release that pressure when you

open your mouths and cry to the Lord from the pits of your stomachs and from the bottoms of your hearts.

When the minister preaches an especially evocative sermon and places everyone in the spirit; when one has an opportunity to glimpse the joy that is likely to come from a heavenly state; and when holy dancing ensues, then pressure is released from the body's muscles, which have been crunched and contorted from bearing the daily pressures and stresses of racism and discrimination.

Therefore, whether it is the release that comes from singing with a shout or shout-dancing, church serves as a great pressure release valve. Imagine the murders that would have occurred in the Black community had church not been available to serve this function. We say Black community because as the great late historian, Dr. John Henrick Clarke, once said, "Blacks kill each other when one steps on the other's freshly shined shoes, but they will not lift a finger to harm a White man who has created and manages the situation that causes such pressure and anger to build up in their bodies" (paraphrasing).³ So, thank God for church. It has saved many lives. It facilitates the great catharsis.

The Black Christian Church has also served as a forum for development of great communications/oratory and music skills. Afrodescendants come out of an oral tradition, so

³ The essence of this statement was provided by Prof. Clarke in his famous lecture, "The African Mind" (circa 1994).

oration was and is part of what we did and do. However, the Black Christian Church enabled us to extend our skills in this area. And of course, it goes without saying that the church gave us an opportunity to develop many music forms—most of which did not remain in the church but they found fertile ground in the juke joints, in the pool halls, night clubs, radio and television stations, and now on the Internet. In fact, the rhythms and raps that began to evolve in the 1980s are now finding their way into the church—a type of reversal of the pattern that had been observed during earlier periods.

But one of the most important benefits that came out of the Black Christian Church experience was developing the ability to organize and manage business. We learned how to use our community as a resource and raise funds early on in the 19th century to build more churches and church-affiliated schools—what have become Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Later, we used churches—especially Black Catholic Churches—to form social and philanthropic organizations. It was through the churches that black insurance companies (burial leagues) formed, and mortician businesses sprouted. Finally, churches, with their tradition of after-meeting snacks and drinks sparked the development of many restaurants. If we were to study effectively the origin of many Black businesses, especially in the service industries, we would surely find that their origins extend back to, and is tightly linked with, a black church setting. Think about laundry services, barbershops, shoe repair shops, etc. Black folk were on their way to heaven on Sunday mornings, and they wanted their hair to look

its best, their clothes to be properly cleaned and pressed, and their shoes to have a mirror-like shine. Black churches have also invested over the years in caring for the young and the elderly. Daycare centers and nursing homes are common-place investments for many Black congregations. Unarguably, the Black Christian Church has played a major role in Black entrepreneurship, and in creating jobs in the Black community.

We cannot leave this subject without mentioning the extension of business principles to religious organizations as envisioned and executed by the Black Muslim movement. The Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad's (PBUH) program placed Black empowerment through entrepreneurship very high on the list of the ways of righteous living. Whether it was Whiting H&G Fish that was imported from the waters off the coast of Peru, to the Nation-made bean pies, incenses, oils, perfumes, and the ubiquitous newspapers, when you said Black Muslim, you meant Black business.

We have already mentioned churches' financing of schools, but it is important to make the additional link to the fact that those schools created the opportunities for Blacks to become educators. To this very day, many of the nation's greatest educators are Black. The two most recent U.S. Presidential Administrations have brought Black educators to Washington, D.C. to head the Department of Education. Relatedly, the Black Muslim's newspaper does not even represent the tip of the iceberg when it comes to considering the innumerable publishing operations that cropped up through churches' need

for Sunday school teaching materials and for ways to disseminate information throughout the Black community.

We have spoken disparagingly about Black preachers and their role as middle-men between Black and White worlds. Nevertheless, Black Christian Church denominations enabled Black men and women to relearn the business of administration. Churches taught us how to design organizational structures and how to create strong organizational hierarchies. It turns out that we may have mimicked White organizational structures in many ways, and that we may have been even more successful had we employed organizational paradigms that are reflected in African traditions; however, what we built worked and, in many cases, flourished. One aspect of our churches which is very reminiscent of African traditions is the way Black preachers often serve as a type of tribal chief—speaking for the entire congregation and claiming ownership of much of what his congregation possesses.

But one of the most enduring characteristics and end-products of the Black Christian Church is that it has taught us how to pray and believe. Now, we believe that meditation is very important as a planning and focusing device. And we believe that it is important to invite the blessings of the creator upon your efforts. The operative terms here are “your efforts.” In other words, we don’t believe in asking God through prayer to do something that we can do for ourselves. We believe that, too often, the Black Christian Church has placed Black Americans in adverse conditions because of a dependency on prayer. This prayer

without action is barren, as is “faith without works” (*Holy Bible, James 2:20*). However, the correct chemistry of faith, meditation, prayerful invitations of blessings from God, and action comprise a combination that is difficult to beat. Therefore the church must be applauded, in a very resounding way, for its efforts to teach Black American key components of that formula.

We can leave this section now with a clear view of “The Good” aspects of Black Christian Church operations. We could be here many days calling the names of great contributors to the Black church tradition. In fact, if it does not exist, then an encyclopedia on the Black church should be developed to recognize and honor the many souls who have played a role in using this great social instrument to bring Black Americans so far down the road to development. But that road has had many bumps, and, at this critical juncture in history, that road may, in effect, lead Black America over a precipice. That is why we are discussing the need for *CHANGE*. To comprehend more completely why there is a need for *CHANGE*, let’s consider “The Bad” and “The Ugly” of the Black Christian Church.

The Bad

Certainly the Black Christian Church has provided numerous favorable outcomes for Black Americans. However, every coin has at least two sides. In the case of the Black church, the reverse side reflects at least seven unfavorable outcomes: (1) The creation of unworthy sinners; (2) a God identity conundrum; (3)

excessive spirituality; (4) complacency and inactivity; (5) over-dependence on leadership; (6) inability to produce disciplined leadership; and (7) development of an affinity for the surreal and esoteric, as opposed to the real and practical. We will address each one of these, in turn, below.

First, all of the “Abrahamic” religions, including Christianity, begin with a *Genesis*, a Garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve’s original sin. Imagine if the world had never been told that man had strayed at the beginning, that by doing so he is a sinner, and that he must be redeemed. Thinking logically, it is conceivable and logical that Black Americans should abandon this religious paradigm. What did Adam and Eve do? They ate an apple. More realistically, according to *Genesis*, they violated God’s edict that they not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That is, they decided, with the help of a satanic force, that they wanted to know more about the life that they were experiencing. They wanted their eyes to come open. Why is this sin? Why should not your eyes be wide open when it comes to fully overstanding life itself? In fact, this aspect of the *Genesis* is designed to make the world apprehensive about knowing too much. If you do not know, then you can be easily bamboozled and hoodwinked—including believing that you are a sinner and unworthy of all that life has to offer. Sin as we know it must occur in the context of a social agreement. Adam and Eve, according to *Genesis*, were never permitted beforehand to agree or disagree to God’s requirements. After the fact, they violate his request, and then he punishes them and the remainder of mankind for an extended period. This is not fair. This

is not God. On the other hand, if you agree to participate in a society, then you must agree to the guidelines that are adopted by that society. If you violate those guidelines, then you sin and you must pay the piper. But willy-nilly, one should not be forced to comply without being given sufficient opportunity to reject the proposition. Therefore, we should reject the myth of the “original sin” and the idea that we are unworthy. We are as worthy as anyone else to receive the sweet fruits that life has to offer, and we deserve to enjoy those fruits as long as we remain within the guidelines that we agree to meet within the context of the society in which we choose to live. The promulgation of an “original sin” concept and the related unworthiness is a core bad of the Black Christian Church.

Second, it is common knowledge that Black Americans have a God identity problem. As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, we all acknowledge that, in essence, God is a supreme father figure. Yet, the God of Black America looks nothing like Black Americans’ fathers. Christianity, as taught to Blacks in America, featured a White Jesus. Of course, Jesus’ father is God, so God must be White. But this White God has to be an alien concept to the Black mind that stands confused as he/she looks to the father, but sees a father that cannot be his/her father. It is perplexing. Consequently, Black Americans cannot truly love God. Without love for God and a complete and unconditional identity and relationship with God, one cannot have the faith that is required to act as if God is your father, and that you can count on your father to be a “refuge in times of trouble” (*Holy Bible, Psalms 9:9*)—let alone on a day-

to-day, hour-by-hour, and minute-by-minute basis. Black Americans may walk with him and talk with him, but the whole while, they are wondering whether this alien father is really hearing them.

Third, an important problem with the Black Christian Church, especially for a Black mind which descended from Africa where God was a real, living, touchable being, is that God is viewed as a spirit—a spooky god. To the Black mind from Africa, God was in everything and everywhere: On the mountain top, in the rivers and streams, in the fields, in the caves, in the rains, in the wind, in the sun—everywhere. Therefore, it is unnatural for the Black mind to fully grasp a God who floats around in heaven, who sent his son to earth, and later directed a Holy Spirit to serve as His proxy on Earth. It is difficult to get a hand around a three-part God who is mostly spirit. Because we had such difficulty grasping such a concept, we went overboard in our efforts to relate to such a god, and we ultimately made God a very spooky being that could do spooky things. For example, instead of seeing God in his real form in his creation and in the people around us, which would motivate us to produce for ourselves, we have come to believe in a God who will magically produce sustenance for us out of thin air. Of course, because we don't know how to interpret the Bible properly, we rationalize this reliance and connection to a spooky god by referring to what he did for the Children of Israel in the Wilderness; i.e., we look for the provision of manna and quail.

Fourth, our inability to identify with, and have a solid faith in, God and our acceptance of a spooky God

have made us complacent and inactive. Instead of being willing to work for what we need and want, we settle for prayer and say, “the prayers of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Of course, such prayers would appear to be more effective if we would put forth a little effort to help the content of our prayers materialize. The Black Christian Church has taught us that all we need to do is to sit back and wait on Jesus—that his sacrifice was sufficient to heal and fix everything. This approach implies that we need do nothing for ourselves. Of course, there is the admonition, “Faith without Works is Dead” (*Holy Bible, James 2:20*). However, if you have strong enough faith, the spook god will work a miracle and you can simply await the miracle. As a famous New York preacher once said during a radio broadcast that we heard, “believers said that they only needed to pray and say, ‘money cometh.’ The preacher responded, yes, ‘money cometh, if you get a jobeth.’” Unfortunately, too much of the Black American experience, from the singing and marching during the 1960s to the fasting and praying throughout the course of our history may have been more effective had we been more active in our planning and action. As Malcolm X said about Casius Clay, (paraphrasing); “Casius didn’t get to be the Heavy Weight Champion of the World by praying and singing; he got the crown by swinging.”⁴

Fifth, a key failure of the Black Christian Church is our over-dependence on leadership. This is not to say

⁴ This statement is from Malcolm X’s famous speech, “The Ballot or the Bullet.”

that it is not important to have leadership. Rather, it is to say that it is important that one have the appropriate type of leadership; leadership that empowers. In too many Black churches, the preacher/minister is god. Members of the church can do little without consulting their pastors. But such an environment reflects a pastor's inability to rely on the power of his teaching to produce high-quality members who know how to use the teaching to make good decisions—decisions that will not embarrass the congregation. Anyone can be a “control freak,” but some Black pastors go overboard with their requirement that members be beholden to them for their every action. This over-dependence on leadership produces a people who are thoroughly lost without their leader; hence, the absence of a real and sustained movement by Black Americans since the sudden departure of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Elijah Muhammad. Since the 1970s, Black Americans have been meandering through—without a plan, without true guidance, and without unquestioned leadership. This is, of course, partly by design, as most of our leaders are made by the establishment media. However, the failure of Black Americans to have a blueprint to follow since the late 1960s and early 1970s is testament to a leadership that created an over-reliance on itself on the part of its followers.

Continuing on this topic, many Black preachers act as tribal chiefs on the one hand, or as witch doctors on the other. Either of these two extremes is unacceptable. No one should be beyond reproach; and no one should have complete and total control over your life. There are powerful minds in the realm of the Black church, but no mind should have such

control over church members to the extent that members feel that they will either be made outlaws to the tribe if they deviate from a preacher's requirements, or that they will end up dead because the pastor will cast a spell on them. This type of tyrannical leadership is unacceptable and should be put down.

Sixth, members of the Black Christian Church are so tied to their leaders that they are unable to discipline that leadership. The preacher is caught with the secretary doing that which should be avoided, yet the members continue to support that preacher. The preacher and the deacon raid the building fund, yet the members continue to tithe. What type of response is this? If someone does wrong in the sight of God, of the *Holy Bible*, and of the church, how can that one go unchastised? It makes a mockery of the entire religious experience, which then makes the Black church a farce. Everyone knows this to be true, but they are not strong enough to walk away and say this is not what I bargained for. There has got to be a better way to heaven.

Seventh, the Black Christian Church caused Black Americans to swing toward the surreal and away from science and technology. Because much of what is taught and what is perceived in the Black church is not real, it is really fuzzy logic. It is not solid science. A life of living in such an environment makes it difficult to identify with a world where the facts, science, and mathematics matter. It may be okay to believe in prayer for the healing of the sick if you have someone in your environment who has the power to wrought healing miracles. It is another matter altogether to

believe in healing miracles when those who are telling you to look to God for healing have not done the hard work of fasting and praying to achieve an exceptionally high state of being in order to wrought such healing miracles. In the latter situation, you are asking for pain and suffering, because you are not going to be healed. How many Black Americans suffered too long and who died too early waiting to be healed by prayer and faith? Our grandmother literally drowned in her own fluids due to her commitment to rely on God, not the doctor. Of course, she failed to see the logic that God had ordained the doctor to work the healing miracle. There are magic men, but they are few and far between. Ninety-nine point nine percent of the time, miraculous healing through prayer that we see on television is a sham. Yet our confusion about the identify of God, our lack of faith in believing that God will help us achieve our goals, and our fuzzy logic that prevents us from differentiating between the surreal and the real, cause us to make illogical decision about how to live our lives. We hear and see the preacher and church members' efforts to impose an unreal outcome in our lives, we know in our heart of hearts that it is incorrect and false, yet we mosey on down the yellow brick road anyway. Of course, we end up home, but it is usually not the home that we intended. When your life ends this way, then your life has not been your own, and your life is a waste and a failure.

The Ugly

“The Bad” of the Black Christian Church is awful—all by itself. But there is more. There is “The Ugly”; those situations and circumstances that should be ripped out of the church setting like one should rip out falsehood from truth and throw it in the consuming fire that is divine light. Destroy the falsehood, once and for all, so that a truly favorable religion can be constructed for Black Americans. We now turn our attention to seven ugly factors that characterize the Black Christian Church. Read them and weep for the souls that have suffered and died in this environment and who have missed the mercy, grace, and peace of God.

First, we all know too well that the Black church, like many other organizations, serves as a gossip colony. The sad part about the Black church as gossip colony is that it is a class-based gossip colony. The wealthy and sidity in the church only talk to the wealthy and sidity. Middle members only converse with other middle members. Poor church members, too, have their gossip industry. One group talking about the other; there is little integration. Interestingly, this is consistent with the fact that, economically, Black Americans have the most uneven distribution of income of all ethnic groups in the United States, which is, logically, reflected in our church setting. Now there are high society churches and poor churches. But it is deeper than that. In each church, this hierarchy of class and gossip goes on. There is no need to describe in detail what types of conversations occur within groups, but it is the same

old nonsense wherever you go around America. It is a rare Black Christian Church where the members are unified in worship, in spirit, in communications, and in effort.

Second, the Black church is a breeding ground for pre-marital sex, adultery, homosexuality, and the transmission of AIDS—quite often led by the offspring of church leadership. It begins with partly or completely unsupervised preparation for special events and choir practices. The young are central to these operations and they come to the church to prepare. Inevitably, in some dark corner of the basement or in a closet, a young unsuspecting—maybe not so unsuspecting—girl joins with a somewhat older or mature-minded boy, and a child is formed out of wedlock. Often, because the preacher's son may be inclined to music and can display his special talents during church services and attract the admiration of younger girls, because his father is who he is, young girls become victims of the son's preying (not praying). Next thing you know, the girls' families are up in arms. Why was the choir practice unsupervised? Who knew what was going on, but failed to stop it? What is the preacher going to do about his son? Will they get married? The answers are: Because church members don't pay attention to detail and are naïve, which is consistent with their fuzzy logic; everyone knew, but no one really knew, so no one took action to stop it; the preacher is going to do nothing about his son, because his son is a chip off the old block—i.e., the preacher had a similar experience being a preacher's son himself; and no, the impregnated girls' lives will not be salvaged by marriage.

Another common scenario is boys and young men experiencing their first sexual relationships during “church sponsored” events; after choir practices, during study groups, during a camping experience, etc. In these cases, however, two males find themselves hooked up in an unnatural arrangement. Before you know it, young Johnny is acting “strange” and acting more and more effeminate as his sexual orientation shifts from heterosexual to homosexual. Again, no one paid attention to the details. Everyone knew, but no one knew. Nobody is going to do anything about it. The parents of the newly oriented homosexual son must now manage life’s uncomfortable twists and turns that accompany their son’s newly assumed lifestyle.

Because many churches are involved in prison ministries, and because many newly released inmates, who have contracted AIDS while they are incarcerated, begin to attend church upon their release from prison, inevitably, sexual relations occur between these former inmates and unsuspecting—or not so unsuspecting—church members. It is often in these cases that a former inmate, who has arrived at a type of comfortableness with homosexual relations that he experienced in prison, preys (not prays) on younger males in the church. On the other hand, depending on the extent of his “alpha male” qualities, a recently released inmate could have a strong heterosexual preference, still contracted AIDS when in prison, and passes the disease on to a female church member. In either case, another Black American becomes a statistic; we are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population with AIDS. It

is unacceptable. It is inexcusable. And it is all in the name of the Black Christian Church.

The third “Ugly” tastes so good. Admittedly, many Black American church services are intense; spiritually, physically, or both. As a tradition, Black Americans often gather for a meal or snack after church services. These orgies of food (gorgies), in effect, fill our bodies with fat, cholesterol, and sugar, which are the most inappropriate and detrimental elements that one can insert into one’s body. Because people like to be around people that look, act, and think like them, it turns out that you can find entire Black churches that are virtually maxed out on their cholesterol and blood sugar levels. They are heart attacks waiting to happen and diabetics en route to failed kidneys and dialysis machines. Our fuzzy logic tells us that we didn’t go to the movies, to the night club, or to the football game; we say that we don’t smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol because we are saved; therefore, we have every right to gorge ourselves in the God-given products produced from the earth. At the same time we are signing our death warrant and guaranteeing that we add substantially to healthcare costs in America. If you believe that this is concocted, then go online and review an Oprah Winfrey Show entitled, “America’s Silent Killer Diabetes” that was broadcast on February 2, 2010. We are not Oprah Winfrey’s greatest fans, but in this case, she homed in on a critical and “Ugly” aspect of the Black church. This is a problem that can be solved with a lot of discipline and a great deal of faith. Don’t go to the gorgies; if you do go, then push yourself away from the table early.

A fourth very “Ugly” aspect of the Black Christian Church is the *modus operandi* of Black preachers. Many Black preachers are pimps! Why? Because it can be a lucrative profession. How? Many Black preachers build their churches from small congregations into large organizations by beginning with a few females to whom they endear themselves. Either because they can sing, dance, or get the sisters happy by combining spirituality with verbal eloquence, they attract a few Black women into their congregation. They then use these Black women to attract Black men into the congregation. Before long, families begin to appear in the church—the original women, their husbands, and their children. Sounds good so far? Is there anything more pleasing to God than to see families engaged in worship together? Well, it is not that simple. The fathers of these families may not be so interested in worshipping under a preacher who “has the mind” of their wife. At home, everything that is discussed begins with “Reverend so and so said.” Mentally, the wife is married to the preacher. Her husband remains in the relationship because he wants to be righteous. He goes to the church and tithes because, if he does not, then his wife will hold out on him. So he is trapped in a dual relationship: With a wife who loves her pastor more than she loves her husband; and with a church that he dare not reject because by so doing he loses the most valued aspect of his life—his family. We take it to the extreme case when we say that many Black preachers are not only pimps by causing Black women to prostitute themselves to their husbands out of love for the preacher, but some of these preachers are adulterers because they become the father to some of these women’s children. This is a perverse

outcome that creates more pain in the hearts and minds of Black men than you can imagine. Next time you go to a Black church, attempt to figure out how many Black women are there because they are secretly in love with the Black preacher and they are prostituting themselves to their husbands. Or better yet, see if you can discern how many of the children in the congregation are the offspring of the preacher.

A fifth Black Christian Church “Ugly” that is worth discussing is the role that the Black Church plays in exacerbating income inequality in the Black community. We have already mentioned the fact that the Black community has the highest level of income inequality among all major ethnic groups in the United States. The Black Christian Church exacerbates this inequality. How? Very simply by transferring wealth from those least able to part with it—and who are at the lower-end of the income scale—to those who have little right to it—and who are already at the upper end of the income scale. Why should a struggling unwed mother or an old retired church sister or brother even attempt to tithe? They need every penny that they have to survive. But no: They have been convinced that if they sow seeds of charity, then they will harvest great returns. I believe that it is well understood that charity is important and, generally, a very beneficial exercise. However, there is the idea that, “charity begins at home.” I am also reminded of the words of the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad (PBUH) who was an emphatic teacher of

“doing for self.” He said, “Do for self first.”⁵ In other words, the poor need to be advised and counseled concerning how to improve their financial and economic situation. Afterwards, when their well-being has been accounted for, then they can show their gratitude to those who helped them and attempt to help others. As it is currently configured, the Black church is guilty of playing Robin Hood in reverse.

Unfortunately, many Black preachers—because they have a church mortgage to pay, a Mercedes payment to make, a tailor’s fee to pay, etc.—seek tithes and offerings from their members irrespective of the condition that that membership may be in to transfer such wealth. It is entrepreneurship gone wild and mad. It is ridiculous that we allow these conditions to unfold just to have a building in which the minister can scream and holler and sing and dance on Sunday morning; just to have a place where you can go and meet a few associates (maybe friends) once or twice a week; just to have a place where you can proceed to kill yourself in gorgies; and finally, just to have a place where your body can lie in state before burial.

A sixth “Ugly” that the Black Christian Church perpetrates on Black Americans is related to the fifth “Ugly”: The practice of contracting out the construction of churches to White construction companies. Why should Black communities scrape together millions and millions of dollars every year to

⁵ See the section, “Help Self Before Helping Others” in the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s (PBUH) book, *Message to the Black Man*, which was first published in 1965.

build churches, but then call in outsiders to perform the work and carry all of that hard-earned cash right back out of the community? This is an egregious sin. In an environment where unemployment is high, it seems rational that Black churches would search high and low for Black construction contractors and subcontractors to do the work. In fact, Black churches should refuse to build churches until they can identify a qualified Black construction contractor to perform the construction—even if that contractor must come from halfway across the country. We have opportunities to do for self, but then turn our backs on the opportunity. For some reason, we believe that “someone else’s ice is colder.” We are here to remind you that Black construction contractors are just as capable as White contractors. Give Black construction contractors a chance. Reduce unemployment and enrich the Black community. A failure to take this approach is a major “Ugly” by the Black Christian Church.

The seventh, final, and most “Ugly” Black church phenomenon that we will discuss concerns the ill-equipped nature of the leadership of many Black churches—especially “Fundamentalist” Black churches. The “Fundamentalist” and “Evangelical” segment of the Black church, in particular, is often led by ministers/pastors who have little, if any, formal training. These “leaders” serve as shepherds of one of the neediest groups in America—poor and uneducated Blacks who are most in need of solid spiritual, psychological, and economic counseling. Yet, their leaders have little-to-no formal training in any of these areas. Consequently, we have here a case of the “blind leading the blind.” When the blind

lead the blind, they all fall in a ditch—a ditch of eternal despair. This is unconscionable. Why do the heads of these denominations permit new churches to form under the “leadership” of men who may be able to sing, may be able to scream and holler a few quotes from the *Holy Bible*, but who can do little else? They do so because it is in their best interest to do so. It means money in their pockets. They run these “jack-legged” preachers through a mini-course on the *Holy Bible* and on the ordinances of their organization, then they release them on an unsuspecting public. Such action represents a living nightmare. No wonder 25 percent of Black Americans are stuck in poverty. Many of them frequent religious organizations that have no means of helping lift them out of poverty because the “leadership” is poor, uneducated, and downtrodden itself. Nevertheless, that “leadership” is smart enough to know that if he can get enough “suckers” to join his congregation, then he can pocket a few extra duckets each week. If he sticks with it long enough and if he is lucky, then one-day he may hood-wink and wing-it into a fairly cushy arrangement where his congregations will be conducting “Appreciation Services” every few months, purchasing new cars for him every few years, and building a church and parsonage for him so that he can live free and high on the backs of the “least of these.” May hell receive the souls of those that perpetrate this type of thievery against those who do not know.

Some Fundamentalist and many non-Fundamentalist Black churches require that their ministers attend seminaries or divinity schools. In and of itself, this sounds acceptable until one looks deeper into the details, and the devil is always in the details. What

we often find is that the seminaries and divinity schools in which many of these ministers are trained do not require completion of the type of curriculum that prepares them for the hardest job in America. Being a pastor for poor, relatively uneducated, and psychologically unhealthy people is a gargantuan task. One must be superbly qualified to perform the task of raising such broken people and putting them on the square. You cannot achieve this outcome simply by reading a few scriptures from the *Holy Bible* once or twice a week. You cannot achieve this outcome by presiding over weddings, Christenings, and funerals. It is a 24/7 job. Day in and day out, a pastor must be on duty; teaching, leading, and shaping the people in order that they may come into a higher level of overstanding and a more propitious level of well-being. Ministers who attend some of the approved seminaries and divinity schools have nearly sufficient training in preaching, but not nearly sufficient training in counseling and psychology, or in business. To remake the minds of the type of Black Americans that we have described, you almost need a Ph.D. in psychology. To turn their economic lives around, you almost need a Ph.D. in Business, Finance, or Economics. These ministers come out of these seminaries and divinity schools with not nearly enough training. And then we wonder why we, as a people, have made so little progress since the Civil Rights Era in the 1960s. We have made so little progress, because our leadership would not know progress if it stared them in the face. They know dollar signs. But progress is not all about money, and even if it was all about money, most of these ministers do not know how to organize their members so that they can become entrepreneurs to earn money, or

how to properly manage the money so that it grows and is not spent uselessly. It is a sad state that is replicated over and over again. Now that we are awake, we have no one to blame but ourselves and our “leadership.”

Conclusion

When it is all said and done, even with all of the good that it does, when you consider the set of “Bad” and “Ugly” circumstances and conditions that we have discussed in this chapter, then we must conclude that Black Americans are a sick people who have been made sicker by Christianity, which is a trizophrenic (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) religion. Recognizing this, we should be more than willing to stare these facts dead in the face and to make a logical decision to explore making an effort to construct a better religion for us by us—a religion that can play a central role in holding us together as a nation after Exodus.

Chapter 4: Elements of the New Religion

Introduction

Thus far in *CHANGE*, we have addressed the questions “Why do Black Americans need a new religion?” and “What’s wrong with the Black Christian Church?” As you know, it is easy to point a finger. It is more difficult to think through a problem and derive a solution set—one that addresses problems and resolves situations completely. We cannot claim that we have a definitive and irrepressible solution; however, we have given considerable thought to what an effective religion for Black Americans might look like. In this chapter, we try to “deliver the mail” on this topic; not by providing a comprehensive and systematic paradigm, but by highlighting elements that would comprise a favorable religion for Black Americans. We begin with thoughts about “Our God and Us,” and then we move on to the religion’s “Individual Requirements” and “Practical Requirements.” We close by considering the role of “The New Religion in the New Nation” that we believe is on the horizon for Black Americans.

Please do not misperceive this effort as signaling that this is the end of the exercise. It is, by no means, a stopping point. Rather, it is a starting point for a long journey during which generations of Black Americans all over the country will have an opportunity to contribute to fashioning this new religion. We must decide, among other things, an appropriate reference

for our religion; our God concept; our self concept; laws/rules and tenets of the religion for living; cultural aspects of the religion including worship liturgies; and what to canonize in our holy book. Therefore, view this chapter as providing seeds that are in the early stages of a germination process that is required to grow a truly favorable religion for Black Americans. Through it all, we must never forget that our goal is to create a religion that will produce the best and most favorable outcomes for us as a people. This is an assured outcome if we identify our correct God, have proper and unyielding faith in that God, and do the work.

Our God and Us

Of course, our God must be Supreme: Omniscient, Omnipotent, and All Powerful. Because he creates us, he loves us, and he is at the ready to be an ever present help. Not to do what we can do for ourselves in this physical world for which he has granted us dominion, but to continue to be our life/god-force until death and beyond. We must see God as the life force, which is sufficient for success. Blessed with life, we have the key tool for shaping our world and our existence. All we have to do is to use life's elements effectively: Energy, health, strength, intellect, and time. Given the foregoing inputs, the material inputs that exist in our physical world, and sufficient faith that we have god-like powers, then we cannot fail, but we will be eternally successful in producing the outcomes that we need and desire.

Who and What God Is and Where We Are Headed

Our religion must recognize that God is the life force itself. God is fire and heat because, without warmth, there is no life. Cold is of death. Yet God is the wetness of rain because, without water, there is no life.

Because we have the life force within us, we can say that we are god. The Hindus recognize this when they greet each other by saying *Namaste*—they bow and place their hands in a prayer position—recognizing the god force within the greeted. The Hawaiians say *Aloha*, meaning “may the breath of God be with and in you—may you continue having God with you.”

Therefore, it is acceptable that we see ourselves as life—as a god force. Only God can generate life on a grand scale; but he gives us the power to create life on a small scale. Actually, the small scale might not be so small after all when we think that our male and female children can shake up the world.

That is what the Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad accomplished. There is nothing wrong with any of them. They were prophets with ideas that were ahead of their times. But we are in a new era now. We live in the 21st century. Cutting-edge technology permits us to clone or quietly engineer our religion—cutting and pasting from historical sources and adding our own so that we create a religion that is suited for us.

Who and What God Is and Where We Are Headed-Continued

When we accept that God is life we accept that creation is one. We know that we cannot touch one part of the creation without pushing on another component of creation ("The Butterfly Effect"). God, the Big God, is expanding his creation and testing himself to determine how much he can manage and control, just as we try to expand our sphere of influence to determine how many balls or saucers that we can keep up in the air simultaneously.

We should view ourselves as expressions of God, because we have the essence of God and life within us. We are gods! Given this mind (mentality), we can work miracles. "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus" (*Holy Bible, Philipians 2:5*).

What mind did Jesus have? He had a divine mind. You, too, can come to realize your divine mind because you are a life extension of God. Therefore, you can do all that God has empowered you to do. But you do not need Jesus to stand as your intermediary. If you accept your "godness," then you can act, walk, and talk like gods. Just let the God force flow through you. You are god!

Now go out and solve the problems of the world. Once you believe in your godness, then you will not spend too much time praying and asking someone who cannot hear you to do for you what you can do for yourself.

***Who and What God Is and Where We are
Headed—Continued***

Given the widely accepted image of Jesus as White, White Americans see themselves as extensions of God. However, because they have identified God with a man, who is limited, their religion is also limited. They, too, must come around to the knowledge that God is not man, but is the life force itself.

God is hot fire and gentle rain. God is the high heavens and the depths of the seas. God is the top and bottom of the universe. God is the east and west of time and space itself. God is everywhere that creation occurs.

God came from nothingness—out of blackness—and spoke himself and everything that we know into existence. That is why God is the rock, the tree, the flower, the wind, and the river. He is the life force in every living nucleus, proton, and neutron. Wherever there is motion, there is God. He is life and we are gods because we have that life. God does not abide in death, but uses it as a forum for creating new life.

The Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad came to shed partial light. Now more light is shining forth. We were seeing dimly; now we are seeing with more light. One day, the one who sees perfectly will come and open our vision with clarity and we shall see it all. When we really see, then we will be free to return to our original state of nonexistence. At that time, we will enjoy a peace that surpasseth all understanding. No heaven! No Earth! No Nothing!

It is critical that we claim that God creates man from the dust of the ground because the dust of the ground is black. By doing so, we equate Blackness with the original man, meaning that we are the first humans on the planet—the first creatures to establish a path for man and the initiators of the first civilizations. In other words, we can rightfully claim a patent on the following intellectual property: Speech, language, mathematics, physical and biological sciences, agriculture, architecture, medicine, astronomy, keepers of history, etc. We should not be surprised that God's original people were extended the power to realize all of these accomplishments, and that we should proudly claim these accomplishments given that we are descendants of Chemi, Kush, Songhay, Mali, and Timbuktu.

In order to achieve optimal outcomes, we must extend maximum power to ourselves. A key method for accomplishing this objective is to grant ourselves god-like powers. We can establish a belief that we are directly connected to an Almighty God, who grants life to us. As one filled with the God-force, we can lay claim to god-like powers to create our physical world around us. Such religious empowerment enables the formation of a mentality that we can problem-solve and shape our world to meet our needs and desires. We can use a common religious principle that faith, which is operationalized through a thought process, causes physical materialization of our needs and desires when coupled with physical efforts to achieve the same. In this way, no physical problem is too big for god (ourselves) to solve because God has given us dominion over the physical world. This moves us away from spooky spiritualism and magic and back to

the type of science that we utilized during the great civilizations and empires from which we descended. It also halts non-action and over-reliance on the magic of prayer.

Even with all of these favorable provisions, our religion must account for the fact that physical reality is an imperfect arrangement. Being a physical human being in an imperfect physical world guarantees that we are not perfect, and that life itself cannot, repeat cannot, be perfect. Therefore, it is impossible for any human being to be perfectly happy in this imperfect world. Simply put, humans experience unhappiness or sorrow (*Samsara*). The only escape from this imperfection is a transition to a non-physical existence in which perfection can exist. Given this realization, we can rationalize our unhappy experiences in this life and the unhappy existence of our ancestors—particularly those who experienced slavery. This realization also helps us to rationalize that, even with a great deal of effort, we are not likely to create a perfect world in this imperfect physical environment. Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon us to not accept imperfections and to work to make the world a more perfect place for ourselves, our family, our friends, and our nation. We should work to make our world more perfect simply because, by doing so, we reduce our unhappiness and that of those around us. The ultimate goal, however, is to transition from the physical to the non-physical and into a possible realm of perfection, happiness, and peace.

Individual Requirements

A fundamental and essential requirement of a new religion for Black Americans is development of the intellect. We cannot know our religion intimately and we cannot function effectively in this world without an intellect that can absorb and comprehend the nature, scope, and breadth of our religion, our society, and our world. Therefore, as a basic starting point, our religion must help ensure that individuals understand the importance of undergoing sufficient academic and other types of training. We should not place too much emphasis on academic scholarship, although it is very important. We should simply say that every Black American should have sufficient training to be able to live a productive and successful life—however our society and individuals define those outcomes. “Study to show thyself approved” (*Holy Bible, Second Timothy 2:15*).

We should establish as a key component, if not a cornerstone, of this section “individual responsibility.” We are not helpless. Therefore, a near first order of business is to create a religion that reinforces the idea that we should do for ourselves. What was the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s mantra? “Do for self.” If we are to be successful, individually and as a people, we must first learn to do for self. Instead of pointing outward and seeking exterior means for meeting our needs or achieving our goals, we should point the finger at ourselves and ask, “What can’t I do for myself.” When this question is seriously considered, we will conclude that there is very little

that we cannot do for ourselves once we have arrived as a life force on the planet.

This aspect of our religion should be perfectly clear about doing for self first, before attempting to do for others. That is, be certain that you are blessed so that you can bless others. In fact, the entire purpose of doing for self is to ensure that your needs and aspirations are met so that you can look after the needs and aspirations of your family members, and those of your community and nation.

However, because the “essential you” is the life force that you possess, which comes from God, then it is critical that you remain in close contact with the broader, richer life force—to continually rejuvenate your life force and to be reminded that you are integrated with, and in sync with, that broader life force. What is that life force and where do we find it? God, the life force is embodied in the land, the fauna, the moving creatures, the water, and the air. We must be certain to remain in close contact with this life force so that we hear and respond appropriately to our environment—preserving it for our current and future use, and for the generations to come.

How do we stay in touch with the life force? Our religion can benefit by adopting some of the proven practices that are reflected in existing religions. For example, our religion should extend the practice of fasting because it has many beneficial properties. A second important component of our religion should be prayer. It, too, has numerous beneficial properties. When we say prayer, we do not intend to convey a meaning of appealing to a spooky god, but to convey the meaning “meditation.” As you know, meditation

enables one to clear one's mind and think more effectively. More effective thinking helps us to correct a common deficiency that has surfaced in the Western world—short memories. In our world today, life proceeds at such a rapid pace and we are bombarded continuously with new and more information that our minds are crowded with items to ponder. If we are not careful, we push important realizations to the back of our minds and replace them with the latest, but less important, realizations. Meditation permits us to continually filter our minds and enables us to allow the most important realizations to return to the surface. When we are able to continually return to the most important considerations of life, then we are less likely to get sidetracked and we are less likely to be delayed from reaching our objectives and goals. In combination, fasting and prayer are great tools for life living, and we should include them as tenets of our religion.

For purposes of maintaining a peaceful life, and one that is as happy as possible, we should ensure that our religion calls for acknowledging the God-force in others. The so-called “Golden Rule” principle has tremendous merit: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” which is a paraphrasing of Jesus’ teaching, “love your neighbor as yourself” (*Holy Bible, St. Matthew 22:39*). If you believe that you have the God-force, and you believe that you have the power and the authority to achieve your desires in this world, then you may become enamored with your power and overstep important boundaries. Therefore, we need constraints to be imposed. Those constraints may be easily actualized by simply teaching adherents of our religion that the God-force

is throughout creation—including in other human beings (without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin). As we noted earlier in this chapter, the Hindus acknowledge the God-force in others by greeting each other with *Namaste*. This is not to say that we should sublimate our interests to others. No. Recognition of the God-force in others is a reciprocally mutual beneficial requirement. Our religion, and the resultant society, should recognize that there must be penalties for those who violate the principle of God-force recognition in others (i.e., respecting others). However, we should make our teaching and adherence to this principle a very powerful aspect of our religion so that we do not find ourselves agreeing to wasteful spending to create jails in order to punish violators. Our ancestors from what is now called Africa were able to avoid the need for jails. We should be able to figure out how they achieved such a high level of mutual respect for each other so that we too can avoid conflict and enjoy a peaceful way of life.

Two basic principles that our religion should include and should emphasize strongly are: Cleanliness and moderation. Cleanliness is important for many reasons, the most important of which is that it helps preserve health and, thereby, the survival of humanity. Another reason for cleanliness is that it will reflect our recognition of a god-like quality. God, the Creator, inserted mechanisms into creation to ensure that the creation can filter out impurities—the unclean. As vicegerents of creation, we should incorporate similar provisions in our principles for life living. Wherever we turn, we should be certain to clean up after ourselves so that our world remains clean and

that we ensure our survival. A greater emphasis on cleanliness in existing religions may have prevented the buildup of poisons in creation that we find today, and we would most likely not be facing prospects concerning the destructive outcomes that accompany climate change—assuming that it exists.

Moderation is linked tightly with cleanliness. When you cook in your kitchen you use utensils that must be cleaned in order to prepare the next meal. Some would advocate that you clean as you go along, so that when the meal is prepared there are few, if any, utensils that remain to be cleaned. Barring that approach, utensils will have to be cleaned when the meal is completed. If you eat moderately—that is refrain from gorging yourself—then you will not be too sleepy to push back from the table, return to the kitchen, and clean it up. Moreover, if you eat moderately, you will have leftovers to consume during a future meal, which will most likely involve little need to clean a dirty kitchen. However, if you are not moderate in your consumption, then you are very likely to find it very difficult to clean up after the meal, and you guarantee yourself a new cleaning task because you must cook again for the next meal.

Another aspect to moderation, and its link to cleanliness, is that if you defile the environment on a small scale, the creation itself is likely to be able to correct the imbalances in a short period of time using its natural filters. However, if defilement of the environment is excessive, then the creation may breakdown and it may take a considerable period for natural cleansers to return balance and stability to the environment.

No matter how you look at it, we cannot overstate the importance of cleanliness and moderation. Therefore, our religion should take cues from existing religions that emphasize these characteristics and we should be certain to embody such characteristics in our religion.

A final individual requirement that we suggest that our new religion emphasize is cleansing through charity. It is common sense. If you are wealthy, but your neighbor is in poverty, sooner or later, unless you expend great energy to keep your poor neighbor asleep, your neighbor will attack you and free you of your wealth. It is much cheaper simply to help your neighbor out of poverty. Besides, there is probably no greater feeling than to help one in need. It is a standard aspect of a normal life. What does a father or mother do naturally? Help ones in need: Their children. Giving to others in the form of charity, whether it is a monetary or in-kind gift, is a joyous experience that helps preserve a peaceful life. Our religion must embody this tenet.

Practical Requirements

There are only a handful of practical requirements that we wish to impose for a new religion for Black Americans. They come in the form of “should nots” and “shoulds.” Actual developers/constructors of the religion may choose to be more comprehensive in their suggestions/impositions.

One such imposition is the requirement that Black Americans become more cerebral and place more emphasis on the mental aspects of our religion and less emphasis on physical aspects. This shift in emphasis would produce a reduction in wasting resources that have been directed at building church structures. Simply put, stop building churches! Churches should only be constructed when there are no other reasonable ways to carry out the functions of a religious organization. Brick and mortar institutions will become a thing of the past over time. We should not be caught with a large inventory of new structures at that time, which will lie fallow. If God is truly a spirit, then we may worship him in spirit and in truth—anywhere.

Being more cerebral, our new religion should place less emphasis on music, the musical, and the melodious exhortations of deliverers of “the word.” More emphasis should be placed on the knowledge that is transmitted by deliverers of “the word.” Black Americans are truly a people in need of excellent guidance. Deliverers of “the word” must focus on providing such guidance in as clear a language and in as simplistic a format as possible—without all of the stylization that characterizes many religious personalities today. This is not to say that delivery of “the word” should not be interesting and intriguing; let us just ensure that the content of important messages is not lost amid the highly stylized and flavorful framework of the delivery.

We have noted earlier in this chapter the reality of our imperfect physical world. Therefore, we must be clear about the importance and meaning of the following

practical requirement. In an imperfect world, it is easy to create and perform at a level that is sufficient to meet minimalist requirements and not to meet a standard of excellence. Such behavior is wasteful and fraudulent. Yet we find that such behavior is acceptable in many forums. Our new religion, on the other hand, with its view toward making the world as perfect as possible, must emphasize and ensure that excellence and near perfection is the order of the day—for all days. Our goal should be to perform a function once, and get it right the first time. This attitude will ensure that we will take the time to think through our actions, avoid mistakes, and to be efficient producers. We will not be called back a second or third time to redo what we have done. God made his world once and for all! We see creation being remade eternally; however, the remaking occurs under principles that were established once and for all at the beginning. This should be our objective and our religion should facilitate this objective. As we seek near perfection, however, we should, to the extent possible, remain in the realm of the natural and avoid the artificial.

Is science and technology artificial? Not necessarily. Therefore, another practical requirement of a new religion for Black Americans should be that great emphasis and value be placed on science and technology. Science and technology are at the heart of today's world and the world of tomorrow. The world is no longer, nor will it be, based on the surreal, spooky, and the superstitious. We must seize the opportunity to meet the challenges that man faces that require great reliance on science and technology. We should not view this challenge as too complex,

but as equal to man's ability at this stage in history. However, while we should remain deeply rooted in the real, we should leave room for those who wish to seek special states of elevation that can be achieved through nontraditional, yet generally approved, religious practices. Nevertheless, we should never permit these esoteric practices to crowd out the fundamental principles of our new religion. We all should come to realize that, when we think about it, it is quite exciting to live holy, righteously, and Godly right here in this present world. Such a life is challenging, and it comes with a richness of experiences that are accompanied by a special type of natural high.

If the new religion for Black America calls for regular gatherings during which worship services are rendered, then we should ensure that our liturgies embody and reinforce important societal practices. For example, in the Catholic and certain Christian Churches, Celebration of the Eucharist is an important liturgical practice that highlights how society functions. In the Celebration of the Eucharist liturgy, God represents the head of government, a company, or a home; priests represent middle managers and their assistants represent first-line managers; church members who receive the Eucharist represent the workers or the lowest echelon of society. The Celebration of the Eucharist liturgy represents leadership providing direction from the highest level through its managers to the lowest level of society. The repetitive rehearsal of this liturgy does wonders for creating an orderly society. Our new religion should not necessarily factor in Celebration of the Eucharist, but it should certainly include useful and

effective liturgies, and should require that these liturgies be repeated as often as possible. It comes to mind that, if the most important Black American social goal is to reclaim, restore, and retain the Black family, then our liturgies should be built around themes that convey the origin, nature, and well-being of family.

The final practical requirement that we would like to impose concerns the afterlife. Our religion must contain provisions for the afterlife that are logical and consistent with what we know—not what we do not know. In connection with the first installment of this trilogy, *CHOICE*, we should consider incorporating into our new religion not only a provision for a soul to escape from this imperfect material life into a place of permanent peace, but also a provision for a soul to depart a dying body and to transition immediately into a new living state. There may also be great merit in calling the end of this life the final end. However, we believe that it is just a matter of time until the process that is characterized in the movie *AVATAR* becomes an accepted prospect for living—i.e., the mind/soul is transferred from a dying and useless body into a cloned or some other type of body. This option for life may very well represent the idea of eternal life that is mentioned in the *Holy Bible's* Synoptic Gospels.

As indicated at the outset of this chapter, we did not wish to impose too many practical requirements on a new religion for Black America. However, the requirements that we have imposed are critical to the practical, safe, and smooth functioning of a new Black nation—any society, for that matter.

The New Religion in the New Nation

Consistent with the first two installments of this trilogy (*CHOICE* and *CHOSEN*), this book *CHANGE* is centered on the formation of a new nation for Black Americans and it discusses the need for a new religion for that new nation. Why does the new nation require a new religion? Hopefully, you have gleaned certain answers to this question from Chapter 1. Simultaneously, however, it is easily discernible and part of scholarly research traditions that nations that are highly homogeneous on a cultural level (most of the population adheres to the same religion) find it easier than do non-homogeneous nations to maintain unity, stability, and growth. The lesson here is that, if we want our nation to grow and prosper, then we must develop a new religion that meets our needs, ensures our spiritual and physical success, and that helps hold our nation together.

A common and commonly practiced religion enables adherents to walk the road of life in lock-step. It reduces the distance between adherents and facilitates their worship of the same God, their performance of the same rituals/liturgies, and enables them to benefit from having similar lifestyles. This may sound boring; everyone looking, walking, and acting in a similar fashion. The fact is that these are the characteristics of a family. Can you think of a generally more enjoyable time of life than life as a child with your family? You and members of your family resembled each other, you all performed many of the same functions, and enjoyed many of the same

experiences in a very happy and joyous environment. Why should members of a Black American nation not experience such joy?

A new and widely-accepted religion for Black Americans in a new nation would help create love for one another. A core function of religion is to teach the value of love—charity. Given our ancestors' slavery experience, the divisiveness of "Willie Lynch" principles that have been practiced to fragment Black Americans, and all of the remaining societal factors that have prevented Black America's unification, we can identify many reasons why we have been sick due to an absence of love. We can use our religion to restore that love; and with it, overtime, we can produce a healing balm that makes our sickness disappear.

But *CHANGE* is not just about tomorrow; it is also about the millennium ahead. As members of a new nation, our new religion can become our cultural calling card that can be displayed as we travel the world performing the role that we have been ordained to play during this millennium. We are a people who have sought peace and learned to negotiate skillfully for peace for over 400 years. Consequently, we will be tasked with maintaining peace on the planet. We will be highly respected for our endurance and survival of the American hellish nightmare. We will be welcomed all over the world as the people who can restore peace and love, so that the people of the world can enjoy the benefits of their new-found ability to meet the physical needs of the world's population. What does it profiteth a world to have the wherewithal to meet material needs, only to find that there is an

eternal threat of hate and destruction? Our mandate will be to overcome evil with good as characterized and as operationalized by our new religion. Let us begin today to construct a new religion for Black Americans so that it can unite us and enable us to create love and peace in the new nation, which is to come.

Let us not fear the benefits that may be derived by adopting selected principles and practices that are already embodied in existing world religions. Being descendants of Chemi, let us practice the chemistry with which we are so familiar, and combine aspects of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, (the latter three coming out of so-called Africa) and beneficial aspects of our American religious traditions in appropriate proportions to create a new religion that will help ensure our success and that of our posterity in the millennia ahead.

Chapter 5: Working a Paradigm for Change

Imagine that you are in your home and that you see a pin on the floor; this pin may have fallen from a newly purchased article of clothing that was being unwrapped. What happens? Your first thought is: “God forbid that anyone (my family members) would step on this pin and injure themselves!” Your second thought is: “I will pick up the pin.” The next move is action: You bend down and pick up the pin and then transport it to the place where your family stores pins for future use. What has happened here? We have described a simple paradigm for change, and you have viewed yourself as operationalizing that paradigm.

The foregoing simple scenario is very important. Why? For several reasons. First, it highlights for us that we recognize issues, concerns, and what we view as problems from time-to-time. Second, we see clearly from the scenario that what we could have done when the pin was observed was to begin to discuss the issue with those who were within earshot: “How did this pin get on the floor? Don’t you all know that you should be careful with pins? Don’t you know that someone could get hurt by your carelessness?” Without doubt, we could simply have complained about the situation and took no direct action to resolve it—or delayed the action to solve it. Third we see that we did not opt for the latter approach. Instead, we moved forward with deliberate action. This problem was a simple problem and we knew that it was within our purview to take action to resolve the problem. Our action was not expensive. We consumed only a

few calories by bending down and collecting the pin, and then placing it in its proper place. The operative phrase here is, “we took action.” It is interesting that in our mind we said “God forbid,” but who actually forbade a bad outcome? We did. We acted as “God”!

How simple, yet how beautiful, a paradigm that has been spelled out here. We recognize that we will observe problems; we recognize that we usually have a *CHOICE* concerning what we choose to do about the problem; we see that, often, we are *CHOSEN* to take action—that is to make the *CHANGE* that is required to solve the problem. God is GREAT!

What we see through this scenario is a life process paradigm: (1) Observation; (2) thought; and (3) action. Even God himself, before creating the world, must have observed a void, thought about filling that void, and then proceeded to act to fill the void—thereby creating the great creation in which we now live. Given that we have been given the power (life force) of God and the ability to act like God (little gods), then why do we not work this paradigm of change more ubiquitously in our lives.

Your answer is, “We (I) do all of the time.” You are correct; you work this paradigm of change. In fact, we have learned and we teach our children to work this paradigm of change much of the time in our lives. We begin by teaching our little ones games; including baseball, basketball, and football. We teach them that, should they fall behind in playing these games, they should take action. How? Ratchet up the defense and prevent the other side from scoring, then

accelerate their own offense in order to overtake and surpass their opponent. This is a simple strategy for change that creates a favorable outcome—a win.

We teach our little ones that, if they fall behind in their studies, then they should redouble their studying efforts so that they can overcome a low grade on one examination by achieving a much higher grade on subsequent examinations. By the end of the course, they will achieve a high overall grade.

We teach and show our little ones that, if we accumulate too much debt, then we can cut back on our spending, accelerate our payments, and reclaim a balanced or surplus position with respect to our financial accounts.

All of these scenarios reflect the aforementioned paradigm for change. Observation, thinking about a reasonable response, and then taking action. As noted, we work this paradigm for change on small, what appear to be manageable, problems. Why don't we apply this paradigm for large problems? We do from time-to-time. Remember that, during the 1950s and 1960s, we faced (observed) vicious racism and discrimination in America, and fashioned (thought about) a solution of marches, sit-ins, and riots (actions), which precipitated a partial solution (law changes). However, even in the 21st century, we continue to experience many of the same problems that our actions sought to change. The reason why our initial actions were unsuccessful in producing a complete and final solution was because, although we applied the paradigm for change, we did not apply it properly.

In the case of small/manageable problems, a simple action-set may be sufficient to solve the problem fully. However, for large, more complex, problems, one must develop full-blown strategies to solve the problem. Marches, sit-ins, and riots did not constitute a sufficient and well-thought-out strategy for solving the problems of racism and discrimination in America. That is why these pernicious conditions continue today. What we needed then, and what we need now, is a more comprehensive strategy for solving these problems. We contend that the real solution to these problems is “nation formation.” But the take-away point here is that it is fine to apply the paradigm, but be certain to apply it properly. As a specific guideline for working the paradigm for change, whenever the observed problem involves persons other than yourself, then it is highly likely that a simple response action will not be sufficient to solve the problem fully, but that a more well-designed and considered strategy will be required to resolve the problem.

In the case of the Black Christian Church and religion for Black Americans, *CHANGE* has highlighted (observed) the problem, and then provided some thinking (thought) about a solution. It is an effort to share these thoughts with as many persons as possible who are willing to consider the problem. Now it is up to you to think further about this issue and contribute your own thoughts about how to resolve the problem—assuming that you agree that it is a problem. Using our thoughts and your thoughts, we (all of us) should be able to arrive at a well-thought-out strategy for resolving the problem, and

then proceed to implement that strategy and produce a complete resolution of the problem.

As noted, we work the paradigm for change successfully when it involves small and simple problems. We have a tendency to work the paradigm unsuccessfully when the problems are more complex and involve many people or social groups. However, too often, we simply throw up our hands and say, "That ain't none of my business. Ain't nothing that I can do about that problem. I can't solve the world's problems." Or we say, "Lord, that's out of my control. I'm placing it in Jesus' hands. He knows how to fix it. And when he fixes it, it will be fixed just right." Have we characterized these responses accurately? How many times have you said and heard these statements?

The reality is that each of these responses is inappropriate. As we have discussed, we are the "gods" of the planet, who have been given power and authority to "do all things." Why should we shy away from problem solving? Is it because we are not accustomed to taking the time to think sufficiently to design complex and long-term strategies? Is it because our religion makes us dependent on a spooky God who is expected to work miracles, when we are capable of working miracles on our own behalf? What is up with us? What is up is that our religion has made us victims. We see a problem and can characterize it properly, but we do not feel empowered to solve the problem. Because our God does not look like us, we succumb to the reality that he does not love us sufficiently to ensure that we will be successful with each and every aspect of our

lives—including solving large and complex problems. We say that there are “no dumb questions, only dumb answers.” The reality is, that there is at least one correct answer to all questions or problems, we simply have to be willing to do the hard work and to invest sufficient resources to identify an appropriate solution to the question/problem. Of course, before we engage on any problem, we should perform a cost benefit analysis and decide that it is in our best interest to spend the time, energy, and effort to resolve the problem.

We need a new God! We need a new religion! Check that. We may only need to return to that “Old Time Religion,” which will cast our God and our religion in proper light. We need a God and a religion that will empower us to be the “gods” that we are on the planet. Given that we are the original people of Earth, in our race consciousness is the entire history of the world. When we are able to resurrect that history and combine that knowledge with the power that will be vested in us when we reclaim the appropriate God and the appropriate religion, then we will be fully and completely successful in all that we do. At that time, there will be no situation, no condition, and no problem that is “too hard for god.” We will be fully adept at working successfully our paradigm for change.

Our job is to get to the just described point in history. We see (have observed) our problem. Now we must fashion a strategy to reach that point in history. We can be assured that, with an appropriate strategy, and with appropriate implementation of it, we can produce the change that we have so earnestly desired.

We venture to go just one step further. Not only should we so earnestly desire a situation in which we are perfect in working our paradigm for change, but we should also seek a condition in which we anticipate problem situations in advance and take appropriate actions to prevent problems from forming. That is when we will be basking in the “Holy of Holies.” To get there, we must begin today the *CHANGE*.

Peace be unto you.

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CHANGE: Black America's Religion is the third book of a trilogy that also features *CHOICE: Black America's Decision* and *CHOSEN: Black America's Calling*.

You are invited to read these three works in order to comprehend the importance and significance of Black America's move toward nation formation.

Interested readers can participate in developing a long-term strategic plan for Black America, which will move us toward nation formation, by writing to BlackEconomics.org.

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