

Interview with Harold Brown [H] and Catherine Crouch [C]
Also with Marcus Harvey [M] and Linda Ferreira [L]

Taped at Episcopal Church of All Saints, Indianapolis, IN
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Transcribed by Catherine Crouch

[C] Why did you ever come to All Saints?

[H] I came to All Saints because I had HIV, aids and it was a death sentence at the time. I had been to thirteen churches in Indianapolis and All Saints was the only one that welcomed gay people. And gay people who had the virus. I was elated to know that and to be received in friendship here.

And there was a group of men at that time; we were called the leather men and that that was even more phenomenal that men wore their leather into the church and various accessories to the aghast at the beginning but they came to get used to that and it was very helpful to be welcomed in a city that turned its back on us faithful Christians.

[C] Had you heard previously that All Saints was the place to go for that?

[H] Larry McPherson and I, we [?] down at one of the local [?] and we had a conversation and he invited me to All Saints. It was through him that I came to association.

[C] And what did you think of it when you walked in the door? Do you remember?

[H] I frankly tune that out. The space and the people at the sanctuary isn't welcoming in the physical sense but the people – and Larry - Larry that's who I was relating to. But the structure itself except for the beauty of the building outside of course it's very striking.

And it made me ultimately proud to be a member of the church. But initially it was important to know that I was being welcomed because there was so much rejection at that time.

[C] What year did was that?

[H] I came to All Saints... I think I came to it in about 1988, yes.

[C] Okay, so and when you looked at the altar who was serving? Racially?

[H] Well, a white man was serving at that time and I was very attuned to that because raised in the Black church and I knew Lutherans who all presided as white priests over Black congregations and that was anathema to me very much like slavery. And so I again did not relate to the sanctity or the liturgy of the church but the person, the priest, all of the priests have been welcoming me that I've known here. Some more... more so than others.

[C] Do you remember anyone greeting you?

[H] First of all it's been so long ago it would be false of me to say yes I do. However those who were who I can recall who are still with us. The first was um Patricia and Jessie Clark they came – oh they did come after me I do believe. But John Anderson, a Black man, was very faithful until he passed but he had come here from his Lutheran experience and he maintained that experience. And I went to his church and saw it - the rejection there. The Lutherans are even more pious about what they think about homosexuality. And John was - I dearly felt for his confusion and he came to All Saints also for refuge and found here it's such a welcoming group of Christians and certainly for these Christian community, a Christian to reach out include others the welcome is a welcome to that extent and from John and I grew a great relationship so that I felt comfortable in his presence. So Barbara was a member at that time. Barbara - oh I forget it – Bingham also so to know whether Black folks were here which also very important to feel comfortable not a “one off.”

[C] So what would you estimate the racial breakdown at the time you came?

[H] Yeah I would say the probably a 1 to 10 maybe, maybe a little less. It would stop. The few Black folks that I knew- yeah I would say very few maybe 10 percent then that at that time. Regular members, you know people would visit.

When I first came to All Saints it was about ten percent. I had known that it had been larger than that but that the transition that was taking place in the community and inside the church in terms of the persons who first made the decision to be inclusive were growing older and so separations were coming. Nan Peete, I remember the striking way that she and there was another priest, woman priest who was selected to be the priest here that was a very phenomenal experience in the Episcopal Church here. I do remember Nan before she went to Washington DC and she had brought a very physical presence with the homeless here which led to the Dayspring Center.

[C] So you weren't here when she was the rector?

[H] No, I was not.

[C] Who was the rector when you arrived?

[H] I don't remember it was ... Nan Peete was the assistant to that priest. It was a woman I don't remember her name. And she was only here a short while of my coming to be a member at that time but I - again Nan Peete was a Black woman and that she had it she was I believe the first Black priest in to be ordained here in the city or even in the state so it was a privilege to know her. And she was a very wonderful Christian. I can't remember that priest's name right now.

[C] That's okay. When you came in did you come right back and decide to join or did you take some time?

[H] I took some time because it was a day filling to join. I didn't know the procedure again so I was at a different, from a different faith so I didn't know what the steps were and it's sort of the way in which

membership here goes. It had something to do with the pledge and then there's a certain period of time that the training and the education in the faith takes place and then after that one is ripe for membership. I remember that way but that wasn't explained to me. I only found out by my personal response to whatever was said in the bulletin and actually told me it wasn't that... But its become much more instructional now. The steps one should follow to become a member or to be baptized in the church.

[C] Do you remember at that time when you first started would did people speak of it having been more integrated in the past? What kind of things would they say?

[H] The people spoke of the integration in the church because the community was integrated. Yes not only did I hear stories of level of integration but there were children who had grown up in the church and become members and they were still here. And not long after I - because they were older and going on different paths in life but yes, women that were integrated relationships, black and white women would talk about their children and the fun picnics and what have you that the church would sponsor and that the family orientation would be embraced by them and so also that the interracial respect of their being friends and visiting one another and sharing each other's children's growth and episodes in life and so that was very heartwarming. But is it also differentiated the family types in the church from the homosexuals.

[C] Did they mix well? The families and the homosexuals?

[H] I think that the families and the homosexuals mixed well in that it was socially open.

I'm not so sure - I didn't feel an intimacy and the friendship between the congregation and myself at that time. I think a long time for some, for me, to have some sense of friendship among the parishioners over time it's been about 35, 36 years before some of them have been warm to me.

[C] Why do you think that is?

[H] I think society has caused us to have a perception of each other that distances us from one another. It's not normal for us to necessarily have dinner with each other in each other's homes. We might effect integration in the schools because our children go to school and so it brings parents together, white folks and black folks, but it's not a - certainly not a familial type of relationship on the adult levels between black and white people that treat you like you're a member of my family.

And I love you I don't dislike you and I do things for you and with you okay? And I take great pride in knowing that I could do something for you because I know you that will make you happy and then you would tell me. And that kind of burst of a friendship and acquaintanceship is far more than just being socially acceptable.

[C] Did you... well it's hard to separate the black and the homosexual isn't it?

[H] There's no separating it.

[C] Because I was gonna say there's no separate. I'm thinking if you went to a Black church and just walked in and would you feel - how do you feel the difference? That's majority Black, maybe 10% white?

[H] Well first how I feel the difference between a congregational mix like ours in the Episcopal Church verses a congregational atmosphere in the Black church, and I'm the first bristly goat?

Well I can answer that question directly because the first 7 years when I came here from New York. I went to Witherspoon, which was the first institutional Presbyterian church, all Black church and so I thought it was coming home. That was not the case and strangers in Indiana, whether racially or any other any other definition are outsiders. And even though I was born here I still had been away for about 18 years so when I came back I was an outsider. I spoke differently, I talked differently, my ideals were differently. My experiences that I brought to the church - such as bringing Shirley Chisholm at one point after some years there. Oh, that was looked on with both enviously and jealousy. There's a kind of a competition - for me - I experience in the Black

church that repulsed me and certainly the Black church didn't accept homosexuality.

At the time I was in the church the society did not have an ideal of a gay community. That didn't really happen - for me - until Stonewall and most of all to Harvey Milk in San Francisco being killed on the steps of the courthouse there. That stirred the nation but as far as my personal experiences within New York at Stonewall... the first gathering about ten thousand men in response to the police raid at night. And then that Saturday was of course an enormous community of men who looked at each other and I, I was looking at the men to say, "Gee, they're that many of us?" I had never seen a crowd of gay people anywhere at any time in my life but at that point then we began to organize. Politically to organize and socially to the marches in the city. And so it began to give a sense of self-acceptance that was far beyond trying to struggle with self-acceptance. In the Black church there is a repulsion, revulsion about homosexuality that's still very much today. Stigma is an extraordinary painful experience more so in the Black church than the white church.

My research tells me that slavery at that time the master could rape what we call rape, but he sodomized men and women in a group of the community, on the plantation. So the embarrassment and the shame that with goes with homosexuality carries over, it goes on. Since we're the most that are in the jails most of ours have experience with family members who know the experience of being in prison and their tales and stories and their attitudes.

My first reckoning as homosexual? Well that was with my father we had gathered in front of the television to watch Crispus Attucks because it was, the city was still quite segregated at that time pre-unigov and he would make comments about certain men on the basketball floor that was about the tone of voice, the mannerisms, what have you, said it was repulsive to him, he rejected that type of behavior, person. And he would call them names like sissy and what have you. So that told me, that hurt me, that defined me and the family to the extent that it carried over in terms of the church. Then when the church, the Black church it preaches about hell and damnation for homosexuality and about David and Absalom going together and... so that is a very viral form of dialog in a Black church. And that filters into the congregation and then a

person's ability to hold office or to relate to the children at that time the unspoken and unexplained idea that homosexuals were the ones who were raping children when it was really some of their people.

But it was part of the nastiness, of the ugliness of trying to impart a taboo to homosexuals in the church. It's all right if you could play the piano and sing lovely. That was part of the inspirational and emotional experience of the Black church. So it was welcomed if you could sing high voice and could really barrel out song with great emotion, that was all well, they accept it and people were accepted to that point. Still talked about, still shunned, but you were welcomed as far as those aspects publicly in the Black church.

Now how did I feel? So when I came to this particular Presbyterian Church I could assimilate because I didn't carry the behaviors that they associated with gay people. But over a couple of years, within three years of membership, "Well he's not dating my daughter... oh he doesn't have children... oh, aren't you married yet?" So I was getting on up to about 30 or so, 30s or so, there were the various offices in the church that I held, one director of youth programs then that cascaded into, "He's going to create trouble. Or, "He's going to take advantage of my son." And so those kinds of whispers got back to me.

And then the oldest member of the Black church, she was busy courting me - of course I didn't know that - and so when I wasn't courting her back she said, "Well are you gay?" I said, "It's none of your business!" But, again watered [?] the confusion in the Black church and anybody that doesn't fit the norm: married, children or what have you or some other explanation for not being married that everyone accepts or knows. Represents... is reprehensible and many, many ways that is bound to hurt you hurt me in my faith to be in a Black church. Which is why I was still looking for a church when I was invited to come and be at All Saints.

START TAPE 2

[H] So that was a wonderful experience at the beginnings of Dayspring I am so sorry when we got to the point - some members in

this church created a commotion that led to the separation of Dayspring and the walkway was put in.

[C] Let's talk about your involvement with Dayspring. And what is Dayspring?

[H] Dayspring. First of all the word appears in the Bible of Dayspring and it's often confused today with the television program that says, "Daystar" ha ha. Dayspring refers to Christ being the spring water which the holy spirit came and it is the translucent experience of our spirituality as Christian one to another where we do supply the feeding to each other both in the spirit and then the visceral sense. So that there is a spring of water that never ceases. So it's a beautiful idea a beautiful, beautiful word to capture the valiant spirit of people here at All Saints, particularly at that time that was being built. To say that there is a source there's always a source to care for those in need and it was the diocese and All Saints... I believe I heard talk that something about the Catholic Church was involved or there was a partnership that made Dayspring originally. It first came forth out of All Saints to my understanding and we were campaigning to raise the funds to build All Saints and at first it wasn't as large as it was now. It was extended seems to me or they were still building it when I come along.

And there was no garden that was a new idea to feed foodstuffs from the garden part of the Dayspring. But in the beginning Dayspring, much of their food was brought from members and community people to feed the homeless families and children. It was such a beautiful community experience I believe in fulfilling the need and honoring the need of those who had it. Not to put down, not the blaming, not the labeling of people, but knowing all of us at some time or other had need and we need someone who helped us. And I just felt so full of pride and love for the congregation to care that much about homeless, homeless families. It started with Nan Peete bringing the homeless adults that'd sleep on the pews at night. Which was chagrin to some other members in the church at that time.

But she was saying well... Christ went to the needy and He met them when they were at. He gave what that was that was needed and so the church is here 24/7 most of the time it's empty. She opened the doors of

the church for the homeless to come in the evening I think was around 7 or so and they could stay until morning, they had to leave in the morning. But they could at least be out of the weather and sleep comfortably at night, safely from many of the forces that are alive at night that betray a sense of comfort and friendship and certainly safety from the outdoors and other people. That the church provided as a true refuge, I was so proud of that. Proud in the sense, not vanity but a proud love that I felt it was really the kind of love in the Black church; that Black folks go about loving each other in need or in distress. So it was happening with All Saints and I would see it with Black and white. It was very important because at that time there was quite a commotion in society about things that happened like the African names being changed. Affirmative action having gone through and then the backlash, there were serious incidents that were occurring at that time that were counters to the love of Christ that I found with the express to bring forth Dayspring, to supply and to care for it, even in the midst of its own problems.

The furnace was a big problem at All Saints at that time, the heat wasn't coming up through the vents and Larry McPherson, who had invited me to be a member, was the organist, he did repairs on the organ and we ultimately... I take pride, pride I must say again. That's a word that is sometimes effective but I take it as pride in the sense of that which we're supposed to do. When you're doing that, yes I do feel proud that I'm doing the right thing. So when we got the organ in Larry got the... he called it a breaking ticker name [?] but it was the silver chimes on the organ where then he built the expanse that went out over the back of the church - it's not there now. That was where the duties of the organ, the instruments were played he built all of that. And I helped him and we would go out to other churches and tune them, organs and what was important was I didn't know how much engineering was involved... the woodwinds, the pipes and the building of the wood cages. And ultimately I helped put in the last organ pipe, 64 foot back there. Yeah, I still take great umbrage to... out of, again Larry invited me to do that out of friendship and knowing I played a little bit of piano...

But it was done; it wasn't like I was applying for a job. Or someone taking the advantage of friendship or friend skills somewhere else it was a real Christian idea of loving each other. Larry was a white man and I

was Black - well we're getting along just as if we were brothers and again I would relate it to my experience here at All Saints. It was constantly thickening. There was something more than friendship going on here. The brotherhood that did not have boundaries and labels and protocols of social norms and taboos was not operating openly if it was operating at all. I suspect it was in some way but it was not "open" open and therefore causing a sense of alienation or isolation or anger or despair. And finally cheated out of Christ's love by the very people who say you're supposed to have it.

[C] Tell me about the doorway

[H] The doorway? Oh! Oh yes. There was kind of like a fight, an argument and it's sad. That was supposed to lead to the garden out here. There was a garden on the side of the church and it was a, it had a spirituality to it and an essence of peace and beauty. But it was also being used by the folks at Dayspring. We were having the children and the adults - who weren't dressed like we were, the rest the congregation or what have you. And they would come in, there wasn't a breeze way like we have now, so there was just a door. And then there was a door further down I believe.

As I recall the whole the whole commotion centered around the furnace not being big enough or adequate enough (aged over) to support the heating of Dayspring and the church. And Larry, who considered himself a plumber. I laugh. Because some folks didn't believe Larry was an engineer. They didn't like the way he engineered. And, he was an intentionally, as I observed, pompous and there were arguments, unnecessary arguments and it would filter into clicks as per my observation. That led ultimately to there being built a breezeway between Dayspring and the church. Where the priests now prepare themselves that room - and I'm trying to recall and my mind's not clear but I'm gonna say, just the same. It had something to do with the way down to the basement to the furnace and it was odd that you had to walk through it in such a way. If you were coming from Dayspring or maybe the church, it was cumbersome and this really felt really uncomfortable, unsafe to walk that way. So folks that I recall would sometimes use that door and there were folks who took it among themselves - I don't recall if they had an official title, who made a

raucous about that. And it set a spirit of separation alive and well between the congregation and Dayspring. There were people who did not believe that Dayspring should be separated from the church, but the financial part was growing in terms of deficit and the diocese, how it had its annual review of the budget and how All Saints was being insufficient in its budget and its operation of the church.

All those things conspired against continuity and, in my opinion, led to a separation that kinda bordered on the taboo of folks who were homeless, were poor, are neglected or neglectful. And that we were better than that and I was very sorry for that spirit to come alive here. Its contrary to the folks who were the congregation, are members of the congregation who made the phenomenal decision and a country that was fraught during that time socially about race and race relations. Things that were hitting the news about disparities in health care, and in the prisons, and policing here in the city was pretty racist.

People would be... our people were being murdered. You hardly heard of white people being murdered on TV (by the police) not to say that we didn't murder each other, white folks either. But it created again a false division. Black and white folks were poor and homeless. And there was a kind of, I felt without being spoken it was kind of a racial divide that was about their needs and the church's need and our need was better than their need. And I was really uncomfortable about that myself personally I don't know if it was.... Dayspring is such a symbol of love between - would you give your child a fish when they need a loaf of bread? You have such truth between you that you would not in any way deceive or deprive someone you love of their need and how it's met. This is the character in my opinion, from my observation my participation, of the congregation.

When I first came here, the growth of Christian, when the truth of the point, in my opinion again, because of the - outside the walls of this church was a racial society that was going on blistering people like me. So to find a group of white folks, who get along with Black folks, who love Black folks as much as Black folks love them, was seriously, more towards Christ in my need and in my life that I would honor then the way things were going on into the outside the church walls in society at large that tempered the ability to make the decision of

inclusion. Gay people, homeless people, homeless men on the entrance of the church. This is a profound gift, in my opinion, of the spirit to have men and women mature on the vestry and in the way in which church operated to choose to address problems of us as human beings and to respond with love and kindness in the fulfillment of those needs.

[C] What about the leadership of the church in your experience - since you've been here? Does it represent our values? Does it represent our congregation?

[H] And when you say "ours" you're speaking to me as a white woman about white people had about this white church. (laughs) I say that is so sad because the tradition which this church hangs on, out of the history of the nature of the church's birth in America and certainly its relationship to the church of England. Which is very, very significant to... certainly me as a Black person. When you say that the king is the head of the church and not God as it would be in other faiths or in Catholicism that's a significant thing for me to have had to learned about in this church and to adjust to and ultimately accept and no longer allow it to be an issue in my living my faith.

The leadership has always been white. The priests are always white. And so it's like father and children. And my father doesn't look like me or I feel like I'm a stranger to my father which I have felt when I became gay. I do not see my father as a father. I see him as a father who is a man. Cause I've been taught in church God is my father, a father to us as his children, that's because he will care and protect and provide for us and he will love us. He does love us; we're a part of him. So. Calling them father, our priests, he doesn't fulfill that role for me; she doesn't fulfill that role for me. They've all been white. I can think of only two of them who ever hugged me.

The Black church, it expresses its sense of Christ's love through hugs and kisses and touch. And there is very little if at all of that in the Episcopal Church. So it makes a big difference to me personally to be treated differently than what I had known at the Christian faith and Christian love - how it was expressed. Doesn't make it any less or any better it's just different and it was important that difference to me.

Because I had identified it with Christ holding the lamb or touching the blind or that there was connection. That's what I do subconsciously and subliminally but it became more apparent when I came into this church. People did not shout, they didn't shake their head, they didn't bow, they didn't tap their foot, they didn't clap. They didn't make any noise at all.

Except for the beautiful singing that goes through a lot of good training and education. But then again that's another very important thing. There's no congregational songs. Much in the black church is brought together by congregational participation no matter what the church. The faithful old songs of long ago. Which for Black folks came out of slavery are well known to all of us down through the years. No matter what state I go to in America we can sing the old hymns of the Methodist Baptist church. There were white folks that came down through the south on the plantation and taught us the songs. And did the space until we became institutionalized churches unto ourselves. So again the disparity here in the Episcopal Church as a whole that takes great cumbrance to order and to the processes and to the rites of the church.

Its very different from my experience in the Black church that would not – that - unbeknownst to me made me feel less welcome. I didn't know that it wasn't intentional but, out of a different tradition in most Black churches you go into you'll find this emotional, I believe spirit of connection that is brought about by community songs, community meals. Usually after church in the Baptist Methodist church. The great old mothers would fix up good old food and you smell it while the preacher was sermonizing.

Here I got the sense that the church thinks it's doing better when it feeds you if its so-called high class food. That takes, for me, away a sense of friendship and camaraderie that allows or invites, closeness and intimacy as friends and folks. Folks as opposed to people. We don't have that here. And then the business educating here is more formal.

[C] Do you think the Episcopal Church in general... I mean the Episcopal Church in general is just more staid, more stoic, more trying to be royal or something?

[H] I guess one could say that and you said the magic word there royal... or loyal. This church never forgets it's a king. It's not God, it's the king. And so for me the emphasis on man made or man things or man dominion - verses spiritual deity dominion. Which the Black church gives honor to God. Many of the Black churches faiths make it a point to say that God is the father, God is the head or Jesus is the head of the church, the bridegroom of the church. Which defers the honor, the privilege, the power of dominance over me to the eternal being God versus the king who's just a man like me. And that for all he is, is royalty of loyalty.

You know he puts on his pants like I do. And he makes mistakes and what have you compared to what we tried to portray God being infallible and being all-powerful verses the king he's only powerful to the amount that he conquers. And so for me I can't make a general statement that would be a judgment about, you know, the stain-ness of the Episcopal Church or it's long historical heritage that was brought about by the king who, for me, made a decision because he didn't like the pope. And the consecration of the church and in the Saint Peter, the God, in Jesus Christ, he decided he would go marry some other person. Which, in the rest of the church before him was considered sinful, was not acceptable and certainly not of royalty.

But out of that he created the church and its sort of, so for me personally as I have learned over these many years in being in the church, I had to quell that and find a sense of absolution for myself with believing in this faith that's man made, versus deceptive assumption to the theology of Christ and other faiths and particularly in the Black faith. Most people don't know that there are 185 Bishops in the Black Methodist AME church around the world. Beautiful royalty if there's any to be had. Beautiful gals in robes and what have you and they were all assembled there in Charleston after that young man killed 8 people in worship prayer in the A. M. E. church. All the Bishops were called together and Barak Obama spoke at that consecration of the Bishops. Which was another high moment in our race relations in the church. I don't know the back, background of that occasion but it was sad. Yeah I didn't see any white folks when it was a white boy who killed Black folks.

Much like the story of slavery. Slavery documenting the course of our lives trying to live them. But this church still rallies that here we had a congregation that grew and matured and made decisions about inclusion in the face of the affront of the rest of society to our people. And we're facing the difficulties that come with doing out of the - ordinary the extra ordinary and the only sad feature for me is it ran away families.

There's no children in this church. There's no young people in this church - why? It's because the people in this church have a level of comfort ability that denies others' needs being their needs. And so, even though I know the church does good things... every year around February they give one two or three large donations to other organizations here in the city. It was unbeknownst to me I just happen to learn that not too long ago about the church continues to support Dayspring as it does, is searching right now for a new priest here having had... if I may say so... it's run of Yale university train of priests.

I went to Yale for first semester and I found it so racist, so uncomfortable to be... I didn't actually become a student. I went there just to find out would I like it and I got the train back to New York - I knew that was not the place for me. And the way in which some classes continued the invective about - at that time there was President George H. Bush and Ronald Reagan - very segregationist, very racist. Although they were portrayed nationally as the heroes of America, and America was a great melting pot and everybody was, "We're all going to get along and we're gonna do this thing together..." and yet it was the era of increasing imprisonment of black folks. The discovery with Shirley Chisholm of the hunger in America - she had to use white folks in Appalachia to convince white men in the Congress that there is hunger in America. That started of all these food programs and food pantries, I spent five years working with Shirley Chisholm in a very, very fine training program.

The church has a phenomenal role to portray in following Christ. I've come to know the Black church and the white church. If you can do that much separate how much more could you do together? I have seen that opportunity here and I could name the names of those people who I know love me in this church. Not my race, my sex, not my gender, but

just love me because I'm a person. I can name those persons and they have a gift in the love of their hearts to tell a man that anyone else would know those persons to be that kind of person in Christ and in their faith.

The rituality of this church I think would be... it, it's hard for the Black folks I brought here as my friends or as my guests. To adjust to all the kneeling and bowing and all that stuff. Again, they tend to portray the man made humanity of the church and His kingdom must be very earthly as opposed to kneeling and bowing because by prayer or spirituality or essence being that form of worship to God.

[C] When you bring your friends to church, your Black friends - why do they say they don't come back, or do they say-

[H] Because of the rituality. When I brought my friends, they were not comfortable with the rising and kneeling and the liturgy. In that it was formal. And most Black churches, even though they have their particular formality, ultimately are concerned with the congregation being a friend to itself. And so everybody, whoever feels included, they go around and shake hands with everybody. Now more of the white churches do that, but that was a character in the Black church. At the passing of the peace, and at the end of the service, everybody said hello to everybody else. It's a form of friendship that betrays the ice breaking that's necessary when you really don't know somebody else and you gotta find some way to say hello or feel like you are on the same wavelength so to speak.

It's a forgone conclusion that if you're in a black church everybody is going to take time to say hello. Or they're supposed to. May not be the case 100% but it's known. And certainly if there's an unfamiliar face, it's your new responsibility to go and make that person welcome.

The Black churches wherever I've been and all the Black faiths... and I have 2 brothers and a sister who were ministers in different faiths so I had a whole lot of experience as their older brother supporting them in their ministry and their office of the church to know that in the Black church the friendship of Christ is a major component meeting the expectations of faith: that there is no stranger and the stranger is a friend. It is a friend who is honored by a friend. Again it's sorta like,

“Everybody is in the family and you’re a stranger only because I didn't know you were there but you’re still a member of the family – Oh! Its so nice to see you.”

[C] And then here...

[H] We don't do that. You come in the door you had ushers but let's - you know each other - there's not an intent to say hello, or to make me feel like on Sunday morning beside those who do. And I can pretty much name them for either we've known each other so long by face that they'll say hello. Most of the folks in here don't say hello to me. They may know me, but don't make me feel a part of their lives or a part of their welcome. And I don't do it either. So, habit. I think that that's the way things are done here.

[C] Have you tried and been rejected or any thing like that? Can you tell me about that?

[H] Yes, I do keep it to myself.

[C] You do?

[H] Yes.

[C] Ok. But it happens?

[H] Oh yes.

[C] Why do you come back if that's happening?

[H] Because its not about them and it's not about the church. My thing is being a gay man I've been persecuted so much in the society. When the ideal of gay community came about - so that's one thing both physically, mentally and socially. But white folks do not understand that I was Black before I was gay. And to not distill all that part about alienation and racism and animosity that our country still holds on to - white folks do. And some Black folks.

It's just not necessary. I've lived my life on the belief... my Christian faith... whatever the faith may be whether it is here, Pentecostal, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal. I go to five churches now for the last two years, three years out of knowing that God is not in any one of them any more than He is with me at night when I say my prayers. That the terrible mischief of segregating ourselves in the church in Indianapolis is so hurtful to me trying to live Christ and yet I'm living in this division and in this outrage toward me and my color, then my being gay, then my being intelligent. Now this church, it's come to more or less recognize in some degree I'm intelligent. But I've been told by one of the priests here, I was called a monkey.

You can smooth it over, you can butter it up, you can act like it never happened, all you want. But enough folks are witnesses to the mishaps, the ultimate evils and the betrayal of Christian faith in each other. That would prostitute the reason to have a faith.

I've been Black all my life. To walk in the white church and not feel like I'm part of it, part of the congregation and part of the people, is no different than being outside the church. So the racism in the church is a still racism, it's an unspoken racism, it's an un-acted racism, but it is a racism. The spirit here - people don't understand - is that they have the spirit of racism here. The superiority of being the King's church which is the essence of what the social, racial animosity and hostility that it's slavery maintained and in pervades our society, it's the underbelly of our society in all of our institutions, all of our socio-political public circumstances, our private circumstances.

And so, yet All Saints keeps lightening the beacon because sometimes it goes out. But it's always lit at All Saints, the beacon of hope that we're not dead. We may be pressed down - I mean I can see us in the grass. But our roots are still here and we still believe in loving others. It was the Episcopal Church that went in fellowship, in partnership to establish the first institutional church in America with the A. M. E. church.

[C] Have you ever been invited into leadership at the church?

[H] I recall there was that platitude of saying any member could come, or any member could join. I went to a couple of meetings and I

immediately sensed the power of the collecting against me as an individual on the vestry was going to... this way choices or decisions that meant something to me.

Because the vestry cannot see one or more Black people in its presence as having suffered what's going on outside. Just because I dress, put my suit on and come to the church doesn't mean - when I get stopped by the police I'm still a **** and they'll call me a ****. Today. Slam me on the car hood. No matter that I got degrees. Or that I have taught their children. And so this church is ignorant of that. It's unconscious of that. That Black means you Black and for the church not to act like it knows that...

I'm not asking for sympathy or sorrow, I'm saying this is a fact: that I bring my grief with me into this church and there's no place for me to release it. You can release in the Black church. You can holler, you can dance, you can get up and sway with people, you can fall out and everybody will rush over. There's no place here for what they say you come here for church and to be absolved of sin by the sign of the cross and prayers. I'm not; I'm not able to feel it. I can feel the words, they really are lofty and they point my soul in the direction of a higher calling then I do feel absolved, I'm not saying that. But there is the sensibility that allows for touch, for feelings, for emotions. Human things. You've got to be more than human here you gotta to be super human here you gotta act like you could handle anything that is human here. It's not true.

[M] How did the parish deal with adverse events happening on the outside? Within the walls of the church?

[H] Yeah. Well first of all, it doesn't bring the outside in. The church feels like - I feel like- the church feels like, "This is a perfect place, a safe place, this is a whole place, everybody that is somebody belongs here." So we're not part of the outside. We can escape having to deal with the indignities and the suffering and the horrors that betray a peace and a social dignity of being friends with each other. So that special-ality is one of the reasons the church misses the call of Christ to try and then to fight against racism and hatred and their acts, their words, their feelings, they are outside this church but they are also inside here. And

the church would do well to call its attention to what's happening outside.

The church is belief, we don't have any proof. We have belief, we have faith. We have faith in ourselves because we have faith in that which we have no control over like nature for example. We have a reason to believe something's more powerful than me.

SIRENS

[H] The church misses racism when it fails - did not even acknowledge it and the hurt of the soul of the country. Black folks and white folks when disparaging - our horrible murder, terrible ways of treating one another, make national news or whatever they may be... To say nothing about it is to allow a silent complicity. To know that the charge of the church is to speak against evil and then knowing that there's been this particular group of people - maybe can't do nothing about it - but then, say something about it.

[C] We could notice.

[H] That's right.

[C] We could notice sometimes.

[H] That's right.

[C] That would be helpful.

[H] And that in itself is one of the greatest acts of love to simply say, "I know you."

[C] "I see you. I believe you."

[H] That's right, that's right. Here I'm sitting, no one mentions any of the social things out there that may hurt my heart. Black mothers dying in childbirth alarming rate in this city. Federal government had to tell the health department state and local, "Ya'll got a problem over there, why can't ya'll see it?"

[C] And if the federal government cares - this is sad... this is the last resort.

[H] The church should be leading it. It's good the federal government does its part. Government is an important that part of our society. It is as one of the foundational columns that holds up our society; so is the church.

LAWN MOWERS

[L] **[Asks a question about the Dayspring door closure]**

[H] Because it wasn't supposed to be a difference in my mind about whether they were poor and needy and we were employed and earning money. But that distinction was made and people would treat it that way and it led to this outcome. Back in '98 I think it was that the partners decided that it had to become so called "more professional" and white women took it over it. Prior to that it was mostly Black people that provided all the care and the work and what have you with [Dellie Gold?] and her family and other people. She was kind of dissed at the end, in my opinion.

But the battles with all those people that would put that down and not allow the funding to come through to keep Dayspring going. The Catholic Church, the diocese, some wealthy donors. All that dissention that came out of those people coming into the church. "Those" people coming into the church. And all because the furnace - this, it was a physical object that people were coping, adjusting to, were getting around the best way they could. Just to feel a part of the church. Most of those folks over there have some kind of religion or some kind of experience faithfully. This church is an anchor. It don't act like it, but this church is an anchor. For many who believe and want their children to find out they're supposed to believe - but we don't do it, in my opinion.

[C] I know, we don't even ask them to come to church here.

[H] We don't go to them and it's the same thing with the Black folks.

You don't go to them. Now there's a program that went about walking around tour of the churches. Well I suggested that way back but I was Black so it was declined and I took offense to it. Because the congregation what you're talking about to mix... there are about 15 churches in walking distance of this church and they were Black. A great otherwise white church, Presbyterian Church down here on the corner of Delaware and 16th has expanded, it has done some development to the physical architecture. But it has always had a full house and it's always been very active in the community and it is richly blessed in the kinds of people who make it that kind of church. Much like All Saints has been a spring for Dayspring for example, in past years but the work and aging gets to us, I can't do what I used to do.

So if you don't have young people coming along and you're not teaching them and not showing them the principles and the value by the way you make decisions in the way you act, the way you talk, they're not going to learn it. And they're not gonna care about those things, about using principles. About other people. People who are people like themselves. I'm a people person, not a person people.

[C] Okay. Okay we're changing the card.

[H] Awareness... I came to awareness.... I struggled about 6 years ago with this priest here. The concerns were for Black folks not only in the church but I went to an installation. The United Black Episcopalians did much of that service and they suddenly became visible. They're visible in some of the churches like Christ Church downtown. I visited Saint Paul and St Luke's and others and going out to Speedway and what have you. There ain't no sense of Black folks nowhere in those churches either, when you got a presiding bishop who's Black. You got a local bishop who the presiding bishop and these white folks here - you wouldn't know that there was a Black person there. What am I supposed to feel as a member? And for the extraordinary, extraordinary blessing of the spirit to move bishop Tutu to change a whole nation back to reconciliation under the same indignity of racism that was called apartheid over there and had a different melancholy.

But it's the same thing, hatred. You can call it all kinds of names, there's all kinds of degrees, but what you're talking about is hatred. And there's

a reason that black folks are hated. Africans are hated and that has never been dispelled or examined or talked about. Nobody wants to talk about it – no white folks. To help us all understand each other. All this history and everything, all them books over there all about white people. Ain't a black person in there. The blue one, the red one, you name it. But you want me to think I'm your brother or I'm your friend or I'm a fellow Episcopalian. So here's the difference between carnality and spirituality for me.

And so I can look over all these barbs and slights and hurts and trepidations. Social murders, murdering my spirit harming me against myself. Cause I'm Black and I'm gay. I'm an odd ball in a church that is committed to normalization. Pride, loyalty, all very vain things. Aspects of Christianity as opposed to spirituality of Christianity so I can look past it. Because my spirit teaches me to love others but I dislike them and slights and everything else. Just like everybody else!

A lot of folks say, "No you're not". And they don't have to say it; they just make sure you know it. They make sure I know it by not making eye contact with me in the choir. I see them say hello to everyone going down when they are walking back but they won't make eye contact or won't say hello. But what does the choir represent? Certainly in the Black church, it represents a member but here it represents special people who can sing a certain way. And that this is a gift to the congregation even though the congregation makes it possible to be one. And to have such a beautiful instrument what have you, still. We're special, we're not like you and maybe I'm friends with that person, I'll nod my head or what have you. Another degree of oneness and holiness right in the face of the church and the church acts like it ain't there. Where did we miss it? Well you have to admit first of all you missed it when you made the king the head of the church.

So what are we going to do? What are we going to do? And the sad thing is, we keep doing the same thing and we think doing that is having done something good. So anti racism conversations and reports and dialogs over in the education building and big cumbrances' of behavior like giving to Dayspring and all. Those are instances of faith. But faith only becomes whole when it's lived a life long. All my emphasis of goodness

and giving and donations and running people around you doing your [?] for me... those are instances, but the instances can add up.

Or the instances can simply be an instance to itself. That make no difference in racism but looks like the token racism that says every thing is okay. This is something very important - the church projects it's inclusion - windows in Dollar Tree and all these things. And they don't use white, used to be a white base it's white light now or it's tan or it's... Some suggested that there isn't a white race but human race and we're it.

Here it's kind of the same game but it's unknown so they think they can. That's a micro aggression. I'm outspoken but I can feel when I'm not sitting next to the right person. I can ask the question and not get answered. I can waive and not be waved back to. I can say hello to the children but the parents don't speak. No one called, "Do you have a ride?" Catherine, you're kind of a first. People have done it but it is not a thing, it is not part of the comfort zone. The micro aggression is to not think of you, not think of me.

The special act of the priest coming back and giving me bread is contrary to the micro aggression you call but it's also a wonderful contribution to why that micro aggression stands out. If he can hold the bread up here, bring it to me, look me in the eye and wants me to know the holy bread. A lot of the other priests never did that. Micro aggression? I don't want you to have this but I mean.... I don't want to do this for you but I'm going to do this anyway. Mmhm.

People have acted in their goodness and their faithfulness in many instances that I can't recall. But I know they did that's why I love them. I see their face and I see in them my unconscious memory of the goodness they've done to me. One person who gave me 700 dollars when I was dying. And I was trying to put the will and everything together. I didn't have any insurance for burial or anything like that not too long ago. And he put up the money and he also introduced me to insurance agent help. A very special person, a person - you get what I'm talking about, about anti racism. He did it of his own volition because he loves people. I'm a people, I happen to be a Black people but he loved his people and I know that.

There's a married couple here that we went through, the wife, we went to a special program of the Episcopal Church... a training... handbooks study or something. Anyhow because she went through it and I went through it, most of the circumstances of the people in the group was such that they didn't do the work. Not because... for whatever the reason... the work didn't get done. So they couldn't answer the questions in the training book or workbook. But I could cause I would do so. And that's why I didn't give them much levity because I was just as busy they are like I am now - retired - and so you can get your ass over there.

We both know that being outside white America gives you experiences that are un-American that make it hard to be an American. And so, yes Sir yeah I can go on, yes Sir.

So you would say what's your hang up? Well, my hang up is that you have to ask me that question. Why do I have to be put on the spot as a Black person for you to be okay as a white person in your church? It's not about me. If I was a racist I wouldn't be here and if I didn't like you, if I didn't love you, if I didn't trust you, if I didn't believe in you, if for all that the effort of superiority that are condescending to me. What was relevant about you or your church? I would not be here. I turned my back on being the ghetto and with my hat backwards and say, "Hey Baby" you know.

It ain't worth being with white people. It's a struggle being Black to be white people and then be accepted and then be told we want to be anti racist with. Really? Do you know I like popsicles?

[C] Is there anything you want to say that you didn't get to say? Is there anything that you had in mind to say that you didn't get to say or that you wanted to express?

[H] Yes I want to emphasize that what goes on outside these walls is as important as what goes on inside. There has to be acknowledgement whether its spoken, pictorial, statuary... there's got to be a connection. Life is about connection. It don't happen because there ain't connection.

It starts with mama and baby. So, connection. Where is my connection? I thought since I retired, well I'd go to be on the vestry. But then I thought again.

If these people can go through ignoring bishop Curry who married the princess and the Duke. Who could say very little about what's on going about apartheid in South Africa. Which is very much like the segregation and hatefulness in America's racism. If we know that right now there are 847 hate groups known in America by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Where is the challenge to me as a believer to live a good life if all I've got to do is defend it? How can you love me, and not see my pain. How can you care about me and not feel safe when I'm around you. Act like it. Talk like it. Feel like it.

It's scary - you're not supposed to know how to be antiracist. That's why you asked the question. If you knew you wouldn't be acting like you do. The church has to be honest with itself. It's trying to be honest. But trying and saying I am honest are two different propositions. I'm an honest person, I may lie, I might do something wrong, somebody else might think I ain't doing what's right, but I know within myself I'm honest person. I live honestly with people. I live honestly for other people. I live honestly with myself. I can go to bed at night sleeping honestly.

But if I haven't faced my honesty about being gay, about doing nasty dirty things being gay, about going outside my partnership for sex, if I don't protect myself with H. I. V. ... If I am involved in being honestly dishonest... Or that's what I feel this year. There's an honest dishonesty about how much I love you. How much I care about you.

Why you keep on staying Black instead of being white like me. Where are we going to reach the point that my color is not the reason you got color? Where are you going to find out that the color that we were given as human beings - that we even make up when we got Black and white folks marrying each other - had nothing to do with putting some label or stench on it. To allow you to do better than me. Or give you a reason to be treated better than me.

So those are basic questions in the church for me as a Black man trying to live with faith and care and love and find this love rich enough that it could care for the needs of others in that love. Because of Christ's love for me that's my need for love. God's care for me is my need for love. He gives me that love. He give me a whole bundle of it. Now why can't I turn around and do the same? Why did I have to make you different? Or that your difference had to be a difference for me to even care about you. And then I'm only caring about the difference, I ain't caring about you, you were still a negro.

I've said enough.

[C] What would be your ideal outcome of the anti racism committee's work? Or do you think anything is possible?

[H] Yes I do. The first is that it has to have impacted the leadership in such a way that it staunchly stands up and proclaims that anti racism was necessary because we're lying to ourselves or lying to each other and we're lying to the world about what our faith in the Episcopal Church is, to itself that discriminates against other people's faith, their color, and where their social rank is in this society.

That's a bold thing to say you might think. But how do we train the ignorant? We send them to school or we mentor or we teach. So what's the church going to do? Is the church going to make it a devotion to helping others (we are all trained differently by different parents)? Is the church going to become universal in what it want's to try to do with missionaries in Africa and other countries? It don't do that with itself. Is it gonna teach love? Is it going to search to understand itself in love? As a function of Christ, can it invite the congregation to be involved in understanding that you're worried about anti racism when you ought to be worried about anti love. Because God will take care of what you think you've called anti racism. Love will take care of this building. A love will take care of disaster. A willing heart... what is the willing heart of this church? It must ask itself these questions and it must ask itself from the pulpit.

Then I say it would be important to invite the experience of the Black faith into the experience of the white faith for what each are to one

another. Learn that white people cared so much about what was happening in the racism of the country and the slavery in the 1840s and 30s that it helped a Black church become Black church to itself. Not because of segregation - because we know that you love yourself in your group the same way we love ourselves in our group. There ain't nothing right or wrong about that. That is accepting ourselves as we are. Can we learn what the business of accepting ourselves is about? What does that look like? Who teaches that? And how do we all come here from all these roads in life, in this church and make a union of one. And then we make exceptions. For differences. Who's going to teach the whole to become one? Who's going to hold the whole when we get old and feeble and weak?

We've got to do something that connects us back to each other's lives. Nobody has the answers, I don't. But it's in the willingness to want to find that answer because we gonna know what it looks like when we got it! We ain't supposed to know the answer and it's a shame to say that I'm doing this anti racism as a committee to find out why Black people don't come here. I'm deeply concerned that if you start putting up the signs or put them on the internet or whatever and say would you have like these Black... you're going to invite up what's-his-name from South Carolina the congressman to come and speak? Are you going to invite somebody else 2 or 3 or 4 times a year to help Black people know that these people mean something to us too? And that their blackness isn't about why we caring about them, they are bringing us a message and bring in a circumstances to help us to help ourselves to be you and you be us.

That is all I'm going to say.

[C] Thank you so much, okay.