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***“No African Americans take to the streets in protest to demand Whites to love us more. We demand a behavior change!”*** Rev. George C. Gilbert, Jr.

## September 2020 Newsletter

### Donald Trump –

### The New George Wallace

By Rev. George C. Gilbert, Jr.

The actions of President Donald Trump sending military forces and Border Patrol into American cities (Washington, D.C., Portland Oregon, Kansas City Missouri), protecting the confederate symbols of racism and hate and unwillingness to accept that change is imminent are semblances of one of America’s most hateful politicians that has ever held public office – George Wallace.



Just like George Wallace’s hatred for blacks took precedent on doing what is right, President Donald Trump’s lack of love and concern for black lives, dictates the actions of an out of control, tyrannical narcissistic, unstable modern-day George Wallace. Just as George Wallace refused to take heed to federal law, the will of the people and the will of God; President Trump has refused in so many instances to uphold the oath to the office of Presidency, the will of the people and the law of the land. Just as George Wallace, on January, 1963, stood in the doorway to block black students at the University of Alabama and used angry white police officers

against peaceful people, President Donald Trump in the first half 2020, has deployed military troops, police, an unidentified security force, mounted police, Border Patrol, tear gas and again batons waived by angry police.

It is this “New George Wallace;” President Donald Trump that is doing his best to provoke our urban communities in urban warfare, civil war, and civil unrest in order to accomplish his goal of totalitarianism, dictatorship and absolute control of these United States of America. President Trump, without any Congress, Senate or

Judiciary support created a new militarized police force. The 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides a legal construct that says police powers are left in the hands of the State and local officials and not the federal government. However, the head of Homeland Security, stated, “I don’t need invitation by the state, state mayors, or state governors to do our job.



“We’re going to do that, whether they like us there or not.” While the world is crying out to defund the police, redistribute funding to their communities, and to have less military style policing, The New George Wallace – President Donald Trump has created a new force!

The Center for Racial Equity and Justice calls for the Senate and Congress Republicans to:

- Speak out against the unprecedented, unlawful, and un-American actions by President Donald Trump. We view your silence as a sin against the righteousness of God. You too, took an oath to God to serve the people and this nation.
- To promote the freedom of speech and protest in America. President Trump’s actions have attempted to silence citizens who gather in protest, against views that oppose his. Innocent protestors are being captured and arrested without legal justification. When we allow these freedoms to be threatened, the republic of these United States is in serious danger.
- To work in a bi-partisanship effort to develop the John Lewis National Police Reform Bill that reimagines what policing looks like in a world without racism and militarism. Now is the time for you to reach across the aisle and stand on right and righteousness.

The Center for Racial Equity and Justice appeals to your moral consciousness, ethical commitment, and your principled mindset to refuse to ignore the perilous actions of this President. Proverbs 14:34 says, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”

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## The Time is Now:

# Repent.

# Reform/Reimagine.

# Reinvest.

### REPENT

Without true repentance, change very rarely takes place. America has come to a crossroads between Love vs. Hate, Right vs. Wrong, Truth vs. Lies, Righteousness vs. Evil, Justice vs. Injustice, and ultimately, God vs. Satan. And White America finds herself at a pivotal time of ignoring the issues of systemic racism and living in white privilege, or doing the necessary work needed to rid a system of prejudices, inequality and racism. That work begins with repentance.



### REFORM HAS FAILED US SO LET’S REIMAGINE

While many are calling for reform, simply reforming a fundamentally and foundationally flawed system of policing in America is not enough. Tinkering around the edges of a system built on white supremacist violence is not enough. This is a system that at its core was designed to return slaves who were seeking freedom to their masters. At its core, policing in America is about denying freedom to Black people. From the Fugitive Slave Act to the enforcement of Nixon’s “law and order” campaign, to the enforcement of the Reagan crime bill of the 1980s, to the well documented ballooning of mass incarceration in America, policing has always disproportionately targeted and terrorized Black people. Calls for reform are not enough. Banning chokeholds, banning no knock warrants, creating a national registry of repeat offenders within police departments, equity training and other proposals, though helpful, still keep a fundamentally and foundationally flawed system of policing in place.



The public outcries in cities and rural areas all across America and the globe have made it abundantly clear that now is the time for radical and sweeping change. Deep listening to

both rank and file officers and top brass in the city reflects over and over again that by being asked to be social workers, therapists, orderlies, youth development workers and more, the police department is operating outside its primary function in society. We want to see cities in which the police are not called for noise complaints, mental health crises, domestic violence disputes, school behavior issues, or to police our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness. We want to see cities where neighbors look after each other and where congregations and communities work together to provide for each other and keep each other safe. We have seen the seeds of this time of radical love of neighbor in mutual aid networks that have sprung up all across our cities. Now is the time to reimagine what public safety looks like.



Part of what needs to be reimaged is local control over investigating allegations of police misconduct. Much as has been seen with the Sheriff's Department in LA County and in the city of Oakland, CA, A Public Safety Oversight Commission should be established in cities with community advocates and concerned citizens given subpoena power to conduct investigations and hearings concerning allegations of police misconduct. The commission should not be composed of current or retired law enforcement, but instead community and civic leaders who are most impacted by policing. Police community advisory boards and PSA's must have actual teeth in our community and oversight power as well.

## REINVEST

Cities across America are finding ways to fundamentally reinvest money previously allocated toward policing into violence prevention and

intervention efforts (mental health services, quality health care, low-income and affordable housing, educational resources, restorative justice, etc.) There are a multitude of ways to attend to the healing and wholeness of historically marginalized people. A \$110 million refund of the people's money should be reinvested in violence prevention programs. In addition to violence prevention and intervention, we want to see an investment in community led rapid response teams trained to deal with domestic violence and mental health crises, as well as peace teams to deal with basic neighborhood disputes.

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## We Shall Never Forget You!



Congressmen John Lewis and Pastor C. T. Vivian

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## A Message to the Silence of the Evangelicals

(Speech given to the Progressive National Baptist Convention, New York State Convention by **Dr. Matthew Johnson**, Birmingham Alabama)

We come to this historical moment deeply disturbed by the overwhelming confluence of troubling dynamics that have converged in a potentially devastating tide of spiritual, political and cultural chaos. For some it appears that the current crisis emerged rather suddenly with the ascent of the present presidential administration, which through a torrent of lies, innuendos, perverted public policy initiatives and Machiavellian machinations simply overwhelmed our capacity to absorb and process it all. But the current crisis is no flash flood. The debris laden tide swelling around us is laced with pathogens years in the making. Were the waters to recede with an overnight impeachment, the landscape of American life would yet remain scarred or years after and the soil of our republic, poisoned but the toxins left in its wake. Nor will the unwholesome aftermath be so easily cleared, not the atmosphere so quickly cleansed of airborne disease. And it's raining.



As with any flood, the thin veneer of carelessly laid coverings is washed away exposing what is often the wretched corruption of what lies beneath. Issues declared dead and long thought laid to rest but merely buried alive eddy to surface in swirling conflict. Issues of race, of labor, of economic justice, of the bill of rights, issues of education, such as the fair administration and allocation of resources, of criminal justice etc., all covered by the thin sediment of sentimentally cheap religious ideologies of togetherness and glib, self-congratulatory discussions of incremental progress re-emerge as the deep fractures in the bedrock of our socio-cultural topography are once again exposed. And the fissures run deep.

The marauding waters of our current historical surge, running roughshod and reckless has failed, in the nature of the case, to discriminate between our cherished social institutions leaving the Church of Jesus Christ no less damaged and exposed that the other artifices and edifices of our cherished American experiment.

- **Exposed** is the spiritual rot, moral corruption and the delusional racism at the heart of White Conservative Evangelicalism
- **EXPOSED** is its root and ground in an idolatrous worship of Whiteness masquerading as the Christian Faith.
- **Exposed** is the idolatrous worship of Whiteness as the ultimate ground of value and final arbiter of all values heretofore referred to simply as American or Christian, such as Democracy, freedom, the rule of law, Justice and Christian Faith.



- **Exposed** is the complicity of many African American preachers and parishioners who betray their worship at the same time alter, gouging their own eyes in an act of devotional sacrifice to tap the source of their supreme validation.
- **Exposed** is the intersection where the worship of Whiteness and an adulterous Christian religion are wedded ideologically to an exploitative and predatory economic system.
- **Exposed** is the virtual identity of White Christian Nationalism and White Evangelical Christianity betrayed by the invocation of the Divine to sanction the subduction of our deepest value claims, shameful crimes and transparent political corruption for the sole purpose of shoring up the decaying

underpinnings of Western White Supremacy and identity. In the end the Conservative Evangelical Right is no less nihilistic than they claim the relativistic liberal left to be. And it is no wonder since each share in the same self-righteous presumptions of Whiteness filtered through related but alternative semantic grids. But at the core of both is an identity that supersedes God as the Supreme source of human worth and the arbiter of value.

- **Exposed** is the false narrative of a White righteous America, to which all others are at best an addendum and at worse a contaminant of its otherwise God ordained perfection. We see clearly what you are. Over against the collapse of the more popular expressions of the Christians Faith into the spiritual rot of a Materialistic, Nationalistic, Corporatized Americanity thinly veiled by the sanctimonious odor of enthusiastic Pentecostalism, comes **THE CLEAR CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST TO RESIST!**

Unlike the objective of Martin Luther Kings Jr.'s Letter From A Birmingham Jail, this is no plea for cooperation, but rather the wholesale condemnation for the complete prostitution of the Christian Faith; of the idolatrous worship of Whiteness and the heretical synthesis of God and Nation. We condemn and resist the moral bankruptcy of a perverted form of the Christian Faith in Black and White that affirms as Divinely ordered and sanctioned an economic system that places profit over people; the religion of wealth, the idolatry of celebrity; the culture of greed that encourages a criteria of success defined by the abundance of one's of ignorant but trusting sentimentality to the detriment of the spiritual wellbeing of persons, the environment, the other of the most vulnerable among us.

We hear anew, in this hour and this world the summons of the Apostle Paul, "And be not conformed to this world: but by ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 1:2)

Likewise, we reject and resist the claim of the more cynical among us that the Christian Faith is the White Man's religion or that Justice is tangential to the thrust of God's redemptive work in human history declared in and through the person of Jesus the Christ and sustained through the activity of the

Holy Ghost. The fact that slave holders and those who trafficked in the souls of folk though out Western History sought to either excise, dilute or otherwise obscure the Biblical testimony to god's emancipatory providence gives eloquent testimony to the revolutionary potential of God's word wherever oppression abounds. For, "**By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.**" (Hebrew 11:24 – 27)

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## Thriving in Turbulence

Dr. Andre D. Ivy Pastor, First Baptist Church of Marshall Heights Washington, DC

This season has challenged all of us and now grief is beginning to set in. Initially, we all were trying to construct a plan to strategize and move forward. Most of us did not think it would last this long. Now, five months later, we are still trying to come to grips with what we really feel. Let us be honest, some moments we feel sadness, and other times we feel numbness because we are trying to figure out how and when this will end. Will our churches survive, how we will be once this is over, will we come away from this better, and what will our finances look like when this is over? The truth is that COVID-19 has caused us grief and loss. We are grieving many things: what we thought would happen, and how do we handle this difficult season. This time has made all of us rethink and remember how life was prior to the pandemic. We never imagined having to wear a mask, following arrows around a store, avoiding large groups, or having to distance ourselves from family and close friends for safety. Grief and loss are both associated with the pandemic. If we are honest, we are grieving the loss of loved ones and strangers because this virus can take anyone's life. While watching the news, or social media we are reminded each day of COVID-19's destruction. Some days we hope to wake up and the nightmare will be over, but as we can see we are unsure how things will end. It is my hope that we can

take some steps to aid in our self-care during this season. I propose the following to help:

1. Decrease the amount of media consumption. The more we watch, listen, and scroll through our phones and computers, the more anxious and nervous we become. Begin to monitor the amount of news you intake, step back from social media, and turn off the radio while driving. The media can be helpful, but it can also be harmful. We all want to be informed but sometimes we can be exposed to too much information leaving us depleted and drained.
2. Dedicate time for prayer and study. Do not neglect prayer and study of the Word of God. Each day practice these two spiritual disciplines and watch how this will positively impact your day. Your devotion to prayer and study will help you view what is happening from a God perspective.
3. Discern when breaks are needed. This season many of us are working harder than ever before. The challenge is learning when to break from the grind of the daily routine. Take breaks throughout the day and remember that everything will not be accomplished; some things will just have to wait.
4. Distance yourselves from negativity. This means all of us will need to distance ourselves from people, places and things that are negative. There are some individuals that have a difficult time being positive. During the chaos in the world today, find something that makes you smile and understand that you are responsible for your actions. Make sure you understand that you cannot please everyone, but if Jesus is happy, then everything else will work out.
5. Diligently develop a routine of exercise. Understand that amid these difficult times learning to exercise can be helpful and therapeutic. This does not mean that you have to train like a professional athlete, but start to take walks, be cognizant of the amount of time you are sitting each day; do some form of exercise at least five days a week.

My hope and prayer is that this pandemic will not get the best of you, but during this season you will thrive/survive and learn so much more about yourself.

The Word of God says in 3 John 1:2, states "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."

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## **SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GOLD STAR PARTNERS**



- **The Holy Trinity United Baptist Church, Pastor George C. Gilbert, Sr.**
- **The New Macedonia Baptist Church, Pastor Patrick J. Walker**
- **Centerpoint Baptist Church, Pastor Orlando Bego**
- **African American Religious Affairs, Rev. Leslie Watson Wilson**
- **People For The American Way**
- **Faith Strategies LLC**

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