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# Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence

Lemora Dobbs

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STORYTELLING AS A PASTORAL CARE INTERVENTION THAT  
MINISTERS HEALING TO ADULT PARISHIONERS OF  
ST. PAUL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CANTON,  
GEORGIA WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE

A PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF THE M. CHRISTOPHER WHITE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY  
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY  
BOILING SPRINGS, NC

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
LEMORA B. DOBBS

MAY 2018

APPROVAL FORM

STORYTELLING AS A PASTORAL CARE INTERVENTION THAT  
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ST. PAUL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CANTON,  
GEORGIA WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE  
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## ABSTRACT

The goal of this project was to test whether storytelling could be used to facilitate healing in adult parishioners who had experienced violence. The project engaged congregants of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia in a series of five workshops that taught, modeled, and used storytelling as a pastoral care intervention. The personal stories of five research participants were recorded in individual sessions. Common themes within the individual stories shared were identified and discussed with the research group. The group brainstormed ideas about how the church could use storytelling to minister healing to violence victims. The outcome of the study bears implications for future research.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Stories of violence, demise, tragedy, and untimely death seem routine in the lives of Americans in general and particularly African Americans. The annals of history include the names of numerous African Americans who have suffered loss of life due to violence. Each of these situations involves not only a victim of violence, but also that victim's family, neighborhood, and often his or her community of faith. Episodes of violence do not happen within a vacuum; rather, they comprise systemic ills that touch numerous others as they typify human existence. As a pastoral caregiver, one must ask what these and other occurrences mean for adult parishioners who live in the shadows of what has happened in the past and continues to happen now. Perhaps a history of violence shapes the theology of Christian churchgoers and members who occupy church pews in the 21st century. Perhaps also that violence shapes the way adult Christians experience the Holy, the Divine, and the Triune God. This study proposes that the church often does not intentionally seek to minister to this segment of the population. Therefore, the research engaged adult parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia who were victims of violence in the use of storytelling as a means of facilitating healing.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Theology of Pastoral Care**

My theology of pastoral care has evolved over several years spanning from early childhood through and including studies as a Counseling student, a Master of Divinity

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia is hereafter referred to as St. Paul.

seminarian, and subsequently a Clinical Pastoral Education student. Continuing to crystallize my theology of pastoral care simultaneously with my work as a Doctor of Ministry candidate, I returned to my upbringing to examine the theological foundation I received. I was raised in a Christian home where mutual respect for others as human beings created in the image of God was modeled and taught. Upon beginning ministry work as a Pastor/Chaplain, I started to draw parallels between Carl Rogers' person-centered therapy and Jesus' concept of unconditional love.<sup>2</sup> The writings of Howe and Hunsinger further began to shape my personal theology of pastoral care as the concepts of *imago Dei*, unconditional positive regard, and unconditional love provided a way for me to talk about my persona as a Christian, Pastor, Chaplain, and pastoral caregiver.<sup>3 4</sup>

As a pastoral caregiver, I have deliberated theologically whether black men are cursed by God. Continued musings upon the subject of black men and violence brought to my awareness that my first experience with violence occurred when I was an elementary school student. That experience involved a black man. Growing up in rural South Georgia, I was horrified and traumatized to learn that a member of my neighborhood, extended family, and church family stabbed another teenage black male youngster to death. Both the murderer and his prey were the same age, gender, and in the

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<sup>2</sup> Betty D. Meadow and Carl R. Rogers "Person-Centered Therapy," *Current Psychotherapies*, Ed. by Raymond J. Corsini and Contributors (Itasca: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1979), 131.

<sup>3</sup> Leroy T. Howe. *The Image of God: A Theology for Pastoral Care and Counseling*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 51-59.

<sup>4</sup> Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger. *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 40.

same senior class in high school. As an adult, my recollection of the incident revealed the murderer stabbed and killed a mirror reflection of himself. Recalling this story led me to the realization that my own life story contains tragic and continual instances of violence. I noticed especially that a thread of violence seems to permeate the existentiality of humans globally with specificity in African American communities. The revelation redirected my thoughts toward parishioners of the St. Paul congregation who quite probably had also experienced violence at some point in their lives. My hope for this project was that storytelling would provide healing to St. Paul parishioners. Further, I hoped this body of research would lay the foundation for future studies on how pastoral caregivers can minister effectively to victims of violence inside and outside the church.

### **Project Setting**

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia provided the specific locale for this project. Canton, Georgia, the county seat of Cherokee County, is a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, located approximately 35 miles Northwest of Downtown Atlanta. St. Paul consists of approximately 125 members, 25-30 of whom are children. Most of St. Paul's parishioners are related to each other through blood, marriage, or both. I began serving as Pastor of St. Paul in May 2006.<sup>5</sup> In 2013 the population of Canton, Georgia was 24,163 representing a 213.4% increase over the 2000 census.<sup>6</sup> Of the population reported, 96% were urban and 4% were rural with 48.6% male and 51.4%

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<sup>5</sup> I was reassigned to serve as Pastor of Mt. Zion AME Church, Decatur, GA on June 2, 2017. Rev. Ferrun Johnson, the newly appointed Senior Pastor of St. Paul gave consent for me to complete the proposed research at St. Paul since I received approval from the Faculty Advisory Committee within close proximity to my reappointment.

<sup>6</sup> Accessed August 15, 2015, <http://www.city-data.com/City/Canton-Georgia.html>.

female. As reported by the above-referenced data, the median resident age in Canton is 33.7 and the median income per household is \$45,314 with a per capita income of \$21,760. The median purchase price for a house or condo in Canton, Georgia is \$168,609 with a median gross rental cost of \$877 per month. When one reviews the demographic statistics of the Canton, Georgia area, one might draw the conclusion that Canton is a thriving, growing city. For many, this inference is indeed accurate. However, such is not indicative of the immediate area in which St. Paul resides, a place called Stumptown located right off Main Street within Canton's city limits.

Once an area filled with thriving, predominantly African American, middle class families, and small businesses, a map of Canton's Stumptown community as recorded on <http://www.city-data.com>, shows a median household income of less than \$25,000 as of 2013. According to the same data source, an estimated 15.3% of Stumptown's residents report household incomes below poverty level. One of the first things I noticed about St. Paul when I arrived was the condition of the neighborhood surrounding the church. Next, I observed the oppression of many neighborhood residents as evidenced by apathetic complacency with the status quo of their existence. Injustice, poverty, unemployment, and hopelessness appeared to abound. Though some of the original Stumptown residents remain in the community from the area's heyday during the 1960's and 1970's, most have moved outside the boundaries of the neighborhood. A public housing project, dilapidated dwellings, rental properties, criminal activity, and loitering characterize the present community. The catalyst for conducting this research began as I paid attention to the young, African American adult males seen loitering daily in the city park located within .25 miles of St. Paul. My initial observations led to thoughts that pondered what

the church could possibly do to reach these young adult, black males and minister to them. The project arose out of my passion for reaching the lost and ministering to those that are marginalized. As I began to spend time in the Canton community, I formed relationships with Stumptown residents and began to hear their stories. My heart stirred with compassion along with a quest to discover ways that St. Paul might reach out to those whose voices churches and communities do not seem to hear. My point of departure for conceptualizing this research study found its grounding in my contemplative consideration of violence in the lives of young black men.

Reflection upon the canvass that depicts life outside the confines of the walls of St. Paul provides a contextual landscape for viewing the lives of young, African American men. According to US Census data, black males are more likely to come from single parent households without a father present than their white male counterparts.<sup>7</sup> The largest disparity between black males and all males at large in the United States arises in education with only 17% of black males attaining bachelors' degrees compared to 30% of males overall. Thirty-five percent (35%) of black males finish high school and do not pursue higher educational studies compared to only 28% of their counterparts. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of Black males ages 16 to 64 engage in the work force of which only 42% are white collar workers compared to 75% of all men; 36% are blue collar employees compared to seventeen 17% of all men; and 23% are service workers compared to eight percent (8%) of all men. Black men are paid \$37,290 in median annual income, approximately \$11,000.00 less than their other male counterparts that are engaged in the work force. Six percent (6%) of working age African American men are

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<sup>7</sup> Accessed November 25, 2015, <http://www.BlackDemographics.com>.



incarcerated. Black males are more likely to die before the age of 70 than their white counterparts due to a variety of chronic illnesses linked to obesity, serious fatal illnesses, and poor health care. Homicide is the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among black males. Though the project presented herein does not focus on young black men, but rather on parishioners within St. Paul who have been affected by violence, I cannot dismiss the plight of young black men as the impetus which fueled my passion for this study.

With the onslaught of recent media headlines of young, African American males being killed by law enforcement officials and/or each other, I have often wondered if young black men live within a state of what I call *perpetual trauma*.<sup>8</sup> That perpetual trauma might characterize the lives of those in our society caused me to raise a myriad of questions regarding what this type of existence means for a person's social, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing. From a pastoral care perspective, what happens to one's psyche when one's life expectancy is cut short by one's mere race and gender? At all levels of existence, how is one's life impacted by the fact that black-on-black crime is likely to claim one's life before he or she reaches the age of 25? What does it mean for young, African American, adult males to see negative media images repetitively of persons that could very well be themselves? Finally, what will happen ultimately if the church ignores the violence that either claims or scars the lives of a whole category of people without saying or doing something? As these and other inquiries replayed within my head and heart, I sensed the leading of God to collect the stories of violence victims. Though I began the research proposal process with the idea of ministering specifically to

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<sup>8</sup> I coined the term *perpetual trauma* to define the existential reality of persons who experience one trauma after another repeatedly and in such rapid succession that one does not have time to heal from one trauma before another one occurs.

young, African American males, with the careful guidance and consideration provided by my Faculty Advisor and the Project Proposal Committee, I rerouted my efforts. I decided to search first within St. Paul internally to ascertain if some of the same cultural maladies identified in the above-referenced statistical data might also impact the lives of St. Paul parishioners.

That this project was needed in the Canton community was affirmed on June 25, 2017, a few weeks prior to the project's inception. A violent shootout occurred within a few feet of St. Paul that claimed the lives of two young men and injured another. One of the young men killed that evening gave his life to Christ and joined St. Paul two years prior to his death although he did not attend the church again following that day. He was invited by a friend, the grandson of a St. Paul parishioner, who also rededicated his life to Christ and joined the church that day. The young man who brought his now deceased friend to church was charged with two counts of felony murder along with two counts of aggravated assault relating to the June 2017 shootout. I opined that the above-referenced shooting would provide an opportunity for healing for the St. Paul family regarding the incident and other occurrences of violence in their lives.

At St. Paul, family secrets and infighting amongst family members flourish. Therefore, the church's culture reflects an element of distrust and reluctance to exchange personal information with others. Prior to inception of the project, I anticipated some resistance on the part of participants in the Research Group to sharing their stories in a group setting. Further I expected that participants would selectively share only those stories whose elements were commonly known to others within the group. I was uncertain how open interviewees would be as they shared their experiences of violence in

individual interviews with me but anticipated that persons might be more open to sharing in the individual sessions.

### Key Concepts Defined

Key concepts used herein include adult parishioner, violence, direct violence, indirect violence, storytelling, pastoral care intervention, healing, Control Group, and Research Group. *Adult parishioner* refers to members of St. Paul who are 18 years of age and older. *Violence* refers to the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”<sup>9</sup> *Direct violence* refers to violence which is self-inflicted and/or perpetrated by another against one’s own person that results in real or threatened injury, death, and/or psychological harm to him. The term *indirect violence* refers to acts of violence self-inflicted and/or committed against another person that causes real and/or threatened injury, death, and/or psychological harm to one’s own self indirectly. *Storytelling* means a person sharing a story about his/her own life and/or significant experiences.<sup>10</sup> *Pastoral care intervention* means supportive care whose goal

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<sup>9</sup> Alison Rutherford, Anthony B. Zwi, Natalie B. Grove, and Alexander Butchart. “Violence: A Glossary.” *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 2007 August 61(8), 676-680 quoted from Krug E, Dahlberg L, Mercy J. et al., World report on violence and health. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002. Accessed October 5, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2652990>.)

<sup>10</sup> Claude Cox. “The Importance of Lifestory in Pastoral Care,” *Restoration Quarterly*, Volume 38, Number 2, 1996, 109-120.

is to empower persons to live abundantly.<sup>11</sup> *Healing* refers to the process of being restored to bodily wholeness, emotional well-being, mental functioning, and spiritual aliveness; the process of reconciling broken human relationships and to the development of a just social and political order among races and nations.<sup>12</sup> *Research Group* refers to adult members of the St. Paul congregation who volunteered and/or were invited to participate in the workshop sessions and interviews conducted in connection with this study. *Control Group* refers to adult members of the St. Paul congregation who were not part of the Research Group but voluntarily participated by completing the survey connected with this project.

### **Statement of the Problem**

My hypothesis was that storytelling as a pastoral care intervention would facilitate healing to St. Paul parishioners who had experienced violence. If said hypothesis held true, my plan was to use the findings of this study as a foundation for future research regarding the use of storytelling in providing pastoral care to targets of violence.

### **Project Goals**

My project goals were to:

(1) Engage a group of adult parishioners at St. Paul who were violence victims in a process of learning about and engaging in storytelling (“the Research Group”);

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<sup>11</sup> Howard Clinebell. *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*, Ed. By Bridget Clare McKeever (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 97.

<sup>12</sup> L. K. Graham, “Healing,” *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Ed. by Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 497.

(2) Collect and record the stories of five Research Group participants in audio recorded, one-on-one interviews with me in which their stories of violence would be told and heard;

(3) Identify common themes contained in the stories shared by the five Research Group participants individually in their recorded sessions with me;

(4) Involve the Research Group in group process in which identified common themes would be discussed and portions of their stories could be shared with each other; and

(5) Engage the Research Group in an interactive process with me in which the group would brainstorm ideas about how the church might be able to minister healing to violence victims within and outside its walls.

My hopes were that storytelling would aid the healing process of participants and that the parishioners' brainstorming ideas would point them to discussions that centered around soteriology and church missiology.

### **Means of Evaluation**

Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were utilized to design and evaluate this project. The Control Group consisted of 25 adult parishioners of St. Paul. Members of this group completed a Control Group Survey which asked about their experiences of violence at the inception of the study but did not participate in any other aspects of the project (see Appendix A). The Research Group consisted of 11 adult St. Paul members who volunteered to participate in the workshops associated with the study. Research Group participants completed a Research Group Pre-Interview Survey at the first workshop each attended (see Appendix B, also referred to as the Pre-Test). Each

survey asked participants to gauge his/her sense of wellbeing. Between the third and fourth workshops, I individually interviewed and electronically recorded the stories of five members of the Research Group with each respective participant's permission. I identified common themes shared in the individual interviews and engaged the Research Group in a discussion around those themes in the next group session. During the final workshop segment, Research Group members brainstormed ways the church can provide help to violence victims. Research Group participants completed a Post-Interview Survey (see Appendix C). Workshop Evaluation Forms were completed by the Research Group at the conclusion of each workshop session in which they participated (see Appendices D through H). Research Group members were asked to complete a Post-Project Survey approximately four months following the project's completion as a means of evaluating what, if any, impact the individual workshops and overall project had on them (see Appendix I).<sup>13</sup>

Survey results were evaluated by number of participants in the Control Group and the Research Group. Survey results were also analyzed based on types of violence experienced, participants' overall assessments of their wellbeing, and effects of violence upon participants' lives. Effects of Research Group members' involvement with the project and how those participants assessed their wellbeing before and after participation in the study were also considered. Project success was determined by: (1) the number of Research Group participants who attended the scheduled Workshops; (2) the number of

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<sup>13</sup> The Post-Workshop Survey was not an original part of the project design. The instrument was included after the project ended when I realized with the help of the Faculty Committee that I had not asked participants specifically about the impact of the research upon them along the study's trajectory.

Research Group participants who signed up to complete individual interviews versus the number of interviews actually conducted; (3) Comparing subjects' reports of wellbeing before their participation in the workshop sessions to their reports of wellbeing afterwards; (4) Analyzing Research Group participants' reports of whether participation in the project facilitated healing to them as violence victims; (5) Assessing whether the Research Group's brainstorm session ideas could be tied in any way to soteriology and/or the missiology of the church; and (6) By assessing participants' report of any impact of the study upon them pertaining to the surveys they completed four months after the study ended.

### **Literature Review**

Eugene and Poling point to racism as the starting point of violence within the African American context.<sup>14</sup> One cannot talk about violence in the African American community devoid of a discussion about the systemic racism and sexism that have negatively affected black male-female relationships and ultimately families. This view aligns with the central themes of Kujawa-Holbrook and Montagno.<sup>15</sup> Just as one cannot talk about pastoral care to the African American population devoid of a discussion of certain isms, one cannot talk about the field of pastoral care without giving attention to power dynamics, marginalization, and other social ills that plague society. The authenticity of human experience for most contemporary African Americans includes a

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<sup>14</sup> Toinette M. Eugene and James Newton Poling, *Balm for Gilead: Pastoral Care for African American Families Experiencing Abuse* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 35-36.

<sup>15</sup> Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen B. Montagno (Eds.), *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

heritage of violent experiences, many of which are tied to ancestral slavery and the injustice that ensued throughout that era. Though codes of silence prevalent during those times no longer serve to bring healing to African Americans, they still exist to the detriment of rendering muteness to the voices of those that have experienced traumatic, ongoing, and/or repeated violent infractions. Poling cites a need for academia to address male violence as an ethical problem and for the church to break its silence about male violence in its worship and preaching.<sup>16</sup>

“We all have stories. We just lack listeners.”<sup>17</sup> For Cox, lifestory defines a person and the essence of who he/she is.<sup>18</sup> Cox suggests storytelling is important in building the pastoral care relationship on the part of both caregiver and care recipient. Not only is it important for the pastoral caregiver to listen to the care recipient’s story, but the reverse is also pertinent. In the sharing and exchange of their life stories, humans discover their commonalities with each other which provide a foundation for the building of caring and trusting relationships. Cox states, “The stories people tell about themselves are selective. Sometimes we do not remember everything about ourselves; sometimes we choose not to remember.”<sup>19</sup> Cox says we are constantly revising our life stories in light of our emotional responses and how we interpret our pasts. Throughout this project I

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<sup>16</sup> James Newton Poling, *Understanding Male Violence: Pastoral Care Issues* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 172-173.

<sup>17</sup> Jackie Sullivan as quoted in John C. Karl, “Caring for the Stories that Come to Us: Work Narratives and Their Sacred Promise.” *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Volume 56, Number 1, Spring 2002, 29-40.

<sup>18</sup> Cox, 109-120.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 114.



remained mindful that persons share their stories selectively, do not always have access to their stories, and might change the ways their stories are told depending on when and to whom they are told. The selective aspect of storytelling was evident when I compared interviewees' personal storytelling sessions with me to what persons shared about themselves in group encounters.

Scheib entices pastoral caregivers to become story companions to those to whom they provide care.<sup>20</sup> Being a story companion begins with listening and requires empathy along with the ability to understand how one's narrative develops over time within one's environment. Scheib speaks of narrative knowing in which pastoral care providers attend to the stories of others while remaining aware of how their own stories intersect with those of care recipients. She states that both pastoral caregiver and care recipient hermeneutically participate in meaning making. The author speaks profoundly to this body of work in that her views describe the stance I adopted as I collected the stories of Research Group participants.

The writings of Donald Capps prove helpful to this body of investigation. *Living Stories: Pastoral Counseling in Congregational Context* speaks to the research outlined in this project more so than other writings of Capps that were consulted.<sup>21</sup> Capps expounds six types of stories that clients tell including the intertwined story, the distinct or separated story, the minimal or interrupted story, the silenced or secret story, the rigid story, and the evolving story. Capps cites largely the works of other writers including

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<sup>20</sup> Karen D. Scheib, *Pastoral Care: Telling the Stories of Our Lives*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016), 61-77.

<sup>21</sup> Donald Capps, *Living Stories: Pastoral Counseling in Congregational Context* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 26-30.

Janine Roberts, Patricia O'Hanlon, William Hudson O'Hanlon, Alan Parry, and Robert E. Doan and provides case study examples of how the stories clients tell and pastoral caregivers' use of them can impact the therapeutic process. Capps concludes that the pastoral caregiver's use of stories within the pastoral care encounter can supply her with tools for the arts of suggestion, untying knots, and identifying exceptions, all of which can be used effectively as agents of change in the lives of those seeking help. Capps' work can be used to serve as a framework and catalyst for teaching congregations how to hear the stories of parishioners and others.

Jones challenges the church to act upon its responsibility to minister to parishioners who have experienced trauma in three distinct ways, all of which involve storytelling.<sup>22</sup> Persons who have experienced trauma need to be able to tell their stories; someone (a third party) needs to receive or hear these testimonies in a space that is safe; and both the testifier and witness need to begin the process of telling new and different stories together. Though West's writing deals specifically with black women that have experienced violence, two of her findings echo Jones' challenge to the Christian community.<sup>23</sup> West points to four ways black, female victims of violence are silenced: (1) They are not heard; (2) They are not listened to; (3) They are not permitted to exercise their voices; and (4) Their stories are censored so severely that the storytellers often lose their senses of self. West traces the stories of black women from slavery through contemporary times and affords them a space in which to tell their stories and have them

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<sup>22</sup> Serene Jones. *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 31-32.

<sup>23</sup> Traci C. West. *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics*. (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

heard. She affirms the women whose stories she records by including how they survived through resistance, retaliation, and/or by outwitting their abusers. One of my hopes for this body of work was that when participants in the project told their stories and had them heard, they would receive affirmation that God loves them and that their existences are meaningful. I also hoped that participants' lives would be enriched in such a way that healing would begin.

The findings of Kornfeld and Wachtel prove beneficial to this research study. Kornfeld describes the healing process as mysterious and cautions pastoral caregivers to identify themselves as facilitators of healing rather than actual healers.<sup>24</sup> The pastoral caregiver's task is to recognize the beginning of healing which begins when the care seeker reaches out for help. Further, the pastoral caregiver's task is to understand the problem and assist the one seeking help in exploring and following through on their own solutions. Wachtel offers practical ways for caregivers to facilitate care recipients' telling of their stories and to explore problem solving options.<sup>25</sup> He aims to equip psychotherapists with an arsenal of comments formulated and shared so that patients are empowered to engage in deeper conversation about their issues. When therapists come across as judgmental, interrogating, and/or accusatory, communication within the therapeutic encounter can come to a halt. Therapists (and pastoral caregivers) add value

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<sup>24</sup> Margaret Z. Kornfeld. *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities*. (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 70.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Wachtel, *Therapeutic Communication: Knowing What to Say When* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2011). Kindle Edition, 2812-3242.

within the therapeutic encounter when they create environments that provide care recipients with permission to share their innermost thoughts.

Perhaps no one single author has contributed more to the field of pastoral care to African Americans than Edward Wimberly. Wimberly's writings on the subject are so vast that one faces difficulty in attempting to give him a mere cursory review. Wimberly employs seven tactics for discovering the spiritual source of one's personhood through pastoral care, three of which involve the use of storytelling.<sup>26</sup> He also points to the plot of the Greek mythical character Sisyphus as one of the stories that often replays when African American male counselees tell their stories. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus is a character condemned to tragedy by Zeus because he witnesses one of Zeus' indiscretions and reports it. Consequently, Sisyphus spends the rest of his life rolling a stone up a hill, never able to reach the top. Instead, Sisyphus rolls the stone up a few steps only to have the stone roll back on him several steps. Sisyphus' life is one of tragic circumstances and dead ends. As an example of how this myth plays out in the lives of others, Wimberly cites the docudrama, *Murder without Motive: The Story of Edmund Perry*.<sup>27</sup> I have often noticed traces of thought processes associated with the Sisyphus myth in my pastoral care work with African American males and females as evidenced by statements like, "I can't catch a break;" "Every time I take two steps forward, I get pushed back four or five

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<sup>26</sup> Edward P. Wimberly. "Pastoral Counseling with African American Males," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, Volume 21, Numbers 1-2, Fall-Spring 1993-1994, 127-144.

<sup>27</sup> *Murder Without Motive: The Edmund Perry Story* written by Richard Wesley and directed by Kevin Hooks. (Aired on NBC January 6, 1992). Accessed November 25, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFWB9UhMVo4>.

steps;” “I’m doomed to be stuck at this point in life;” and “I’m just going to give up—success is just not in my future.”

Wimberly posits that one of the most significant ways of doing pastoral counseling is to provide persons with a forum for exploring their stories within a biblical framework in which re-authoring or reframing can take place. Hearing and internalizing biblical stories instead of Greek myths like that of Sisyphus might prove meaningful to the members of St. Paul since many of them have backgrounds steeped in Bible stories. Wimberly notes that bible stories and characters permeate the lives of African Americans even when they feel alienated from the church. He draws upon the work of Thorvald Kallstad and Donald Capps in his employment of a technique called role-taking.<sup>28</sup> Role-taking centers counselees on the power of biblical characters to shape their perceptions of reality and influence the ways they interpret what happens to them. The use of role-taking is applicable to and was incorporated into the research which pertains to this writing.

Smith urges persons in the helping professions to dedicate themselves to encouraging black families to draw upon their strengths in meeting the life challenges of African American existentiality.<sup>29</sup> He posits that black families possess an intrinsic

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<sup>28</sup> For a more detailed explanation of role-taking, see Thorvald Kallstad, “The Application of the Religio-Psychological Role Theory,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26 (1987), 367-374 and Donald Capps, “Sunden’s Role-Taking Theory: The Case of John Henry Newman and His Mentors,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 21 (1982), 58-70.

<sup>29</sup> Harrison Y. Smith, “Building on the Strengths of Black Families: Self-Help and Empowerment,” *The Black Family: Strengths, Self-Help, and Positive Change*, Ed. by Sadye L. Logan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 21-38.

capacity to cope with and rise above the marginalization of their existence. Smith pushes readers to approach therapeutic encounters with black people from a positive rather than a negative stance, inviting readers to view the African American church's ancestry from a social work perspective. The author draws attention to programs of the black church that have historically served as positive resources for their parishioners and community residents. Smith's findings motivated me to examine what the church currently does to minister to violence victims from a positive perspective.

Boyd-Franklin imparts wisdom to clinicians who provide therapy to black families.<sup>30</sup> She asserts that to hear the stories of black people, caregivers must understand and attend to the complexity of the African American experience in therapeutic encounters. Though common stereotypes prevail, the lives of black people in America contain diversity on a plethora of levels, i.e. socioeconomically, educationally, culturally, regionally, and historically. These factors impact therapy moments that involve blacks. A variety of elements including but not limited to trust factors, family secrets, skin color issues, racism, and perceptions of oneself and others, might point to some of the reasons that storytelling proved complex with the pastoral care recipients involved in the project. Boyd-Franklin points out variables impacting storytelling and pastoral care that might otherwise have been ignored by me in interpreting research results. Though her work appears exhaustive, Boyd-Franklin's findings lend themselves to further research on how the outcome of storytelling with African American recipients might differ in therapeutic moments when one compares its usage in clinical scenarios with other racial groups.

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<sup>30</sup> Nancy Boyd-Franklin, *Black Families in Therapy: Understanding the African American Experience* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003).

Eberhardt first noticed the power of storytelling for parishioners through the feedback he received from listeners to sermons he preached. His observation caused him to reflect upon the relationship between storytelling and preaching.<sup>31</sup> Several authors impact Eberhardt's views of storytelling as a pastoral care intervention including Roth:

Reality is story. Reality cannot be reduced to a concept or thing, reality is dynamic. This includes drastic changes in being and irreversible movements in time. Reality encompasses trivial and magnificent stupidities, comical and tragic departures, and mysteries beyond solution. Reality, that plot with a meaningful conclusion, is usually full of surprises and mystery.<sup>32</sup>

Stories have a way of connecting people to each other. As persons share their stories, the commonality of their experiences emerges and a sense of community forms. Eberhardt also expounds upon the sacramental quality of storytelling by delineating aspects that point to its sacredness within the context of pastoral care. Effective pastoral caregivers know their own stories deeply and give utmost importance to the art of listening which results in the evolution of a sense of community.

Bowlby's theory of attachment in parent-child relationships could possibly have had an impact on the outcome of this project based on my gender.<sup>33</sup> For Bowlby, a child's separation from her prominent parental caregiver can cause anxiety issues which follow him into adulthood. Bowlby distinguishes between healthy attachment and

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<sup>31</sup> Tim Eberhardt. "Storytelling and Pastoral Care." *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, Volume 50, Number 1, Spring 1996: 23-31.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Paul Roth. *The Theater of God: Story in Christian Doctrine*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 6.

<sup>33</sup> Sir Richard Bowlby, *Fifty Years of Attachment Theory* (London: Karnac (Books) Ltd., 2004).

unhealthy attachment and posits that those who experience unhealthy attachment often exhibit psychological problems as adults. Following in the footsteps of psychoanalytic theory, Bowlby points to mothers as the primary attachment figures for children.

Attachment theory purports that how the child-parent separation takes place can surface in the therapeutic encounter as transference and countertransference occur. Bowlby's study heightened my awareness of gender role variables that may have impacted the project's outcome.

Ellison uses storytelling as the foundation for spiritual care in his contemporary, pastoral care work with young, African American males. Ellison opines that muteness and invisibility begin at a very early age for this segment of the population.<sup>34</sup> With storytelling, Ellison eliminates invisibility and muteness for young African American men. Through the terms *Criminalblackman*, *Social Junk*, *Social Dynamite*, and *Explosive Rage*, the author speaks to the widely-perceived dispensability of young black males through mass incarceration, shattered spirits, unpredictability, volatility, and seething rage. Ellison expounds upon the fundamental needs of human beings to belong, have healthy self-esteem, maintain control, and have meaningful existences. Ellison's study raises my consciousness that relatives, church members, and community residents that witness the violence that permeates our world might also have voices and stories that are not heard. My hope for Research Group participants was that learning about and using storytelling as a way of expressing and honoring their own stories would facilitate healing in their lives.

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<sup>34</sup> Gregory C. Ellison II. *Cut Dead But Still Alive: Caring for African American Young Men*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), Kindle Edition, 269.



With an eye towards the additional research that could arise now that this project has concluded, I must address the absence of African American males specifically within black congregations. Jerome Stevenson addresses this trend through use of his male mentoring programs.<sup>35</sup> Stevenson's target audience is comprised of men from 20 to 80 years of age that are members of Bethany Baptist Church, an American Baptist congregation located on the west side of Detroit, Michigan. Though Stevenson's project contains a storytelling segment, his project differs from this study in that the foundation of Stevenson's project is Christian discipleship rather than pastoral care.

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<sup>35</sup> Jerome Stevenson, *A Manual for Men Mentoring Men: Pastoral Care through Male Mentoring for the African American Man* (Bloomington: WordBow Press, 2014).

## CHAPTER 2

### DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### **Project Implementation and Design**

The project was implemented over a six-week period beginning July 9, 2017 and ending August 17, 2017. I obtained approval to proceed with the research from the IRB and Faculty of the M. Christopher White School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University on June 12, 2017. Additionally, I gained permission from the current Pastor of St. Paul to use its congregation as the context for the study as had been originally proposed by me to the Gardner-Webb faculty prior to my reassignment to serve a different parish on June 2, 2017.

St. Paul parishioners were asked to volunteer to participate in the study via announcements in the Sunday worship bulletin for three weeks prior to the start of the project (see Appendix J). Congregants were also invited to volunteer through personal invitation via text message from me (see Appendix K). Additionally, the Pastor of St. Paul made an appeal for volunteers on the Sunday immediately preceding the project's inception (Appendix L). Participants were required to be 18 years of age or older and members of St. Paul.

At the first workshop session, each Research Group participant signed a Confidentiality Agreement and an Acknowledgement, Consent and Waiver (see Appendices M and N, respectively). Research Group members were encouraged to participate in five workshops:

Workshop #1: Introduction to Project and Storytelling (see Appendix O)

Workshop #2: Biblical and Theological Implications of Storytelling (Appendix P)

Workshop #3: Experiences of Violence in Our World (Appendix Q)

Workshop #4: Group Process and the Experience of Storytelling (Appendix R)

Workshop #5: Collaborative Brainstorming and Planning (Appendix S)

Workshops were held on Thursday nights from 7:30-8:30pm in the Fellowship Hall of St. Paul. Each workshop session opened and closed with prayer. A workshop evaluation was administered at the end of each segment. Dinner was served at each session except for Workshops #2 and #3.<sup>36</sup> As facilitator of the workshop sessions, I read the Statement of Voluntary Nature of Project Participation (see Appendix T) near the beginning of each workshop to reinforce the voluntary nature of each person's project participation. Near the end of each workshop, I also read the Debriefing Statement (Appendix U) which encouraged participants to reach out to me and/or one of the helping professionals listed on the Community Counseling Resources List as needed to assist them with dealing with any emotional distress that they might have experienced as a result of participating in the project (see Appendix V).

Between workshop sessions 3 and 4, I conducted individual interviews with five members of the Research Group. As planned, interviews took place in a private study room at R. T. Jones Public Library in Canton, GA. I scheduled interviews two hours apart on August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> to provide ample time for interviewees to recall their stories without feeling rushed. Prior to engaging in the interviews, each interviewee signed an Acknowledgement, Consent, and Waiver granting permission for the information to be

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<sup>36</sup> Research Group participants elected to combine Workshops 2 and 3 together for ease of scheduling. These two workshops were held sequentially on one Thursday evening. Participants agreed ahead of time to stay for an additional hour to complete the 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop in its entirety.

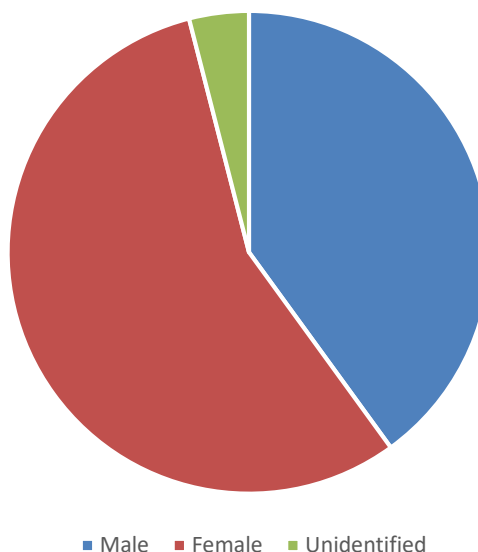
used anonymously in this and/or subsequent research studies (see Appendices W, X, and Y, respectively). Individual interviews were audio recorded using the Dragon voice-to-text software application via iPad. The voice-to-text recordings were backed up by recording the interviews simultaneously through the Voice Memo feature via iPhone. Use of the above-referenced technological features afforded me the ability to modify my previous plan of purchasing dictation and transcription equipment for use in the study. (For transcripts of interviews, see Appendices Z through DD.)

Following the individual interviews, I identified common themes reported in persons' stories. Those common themes were then used within the context of Workshop #4 to engage participants in group process and storytelling. During the last workshop, participants discussed how the church might have helped them when they suffered violence. Attendees brainstormed ways churches might be of assistance to victims of violence. After the workshop sessions concluded, I forwarded audio recordings of the individual interviews along with the accompanying voice-to-text transcripts to the Research Transcriptionist to be formulated into written text.

### **Project Results**

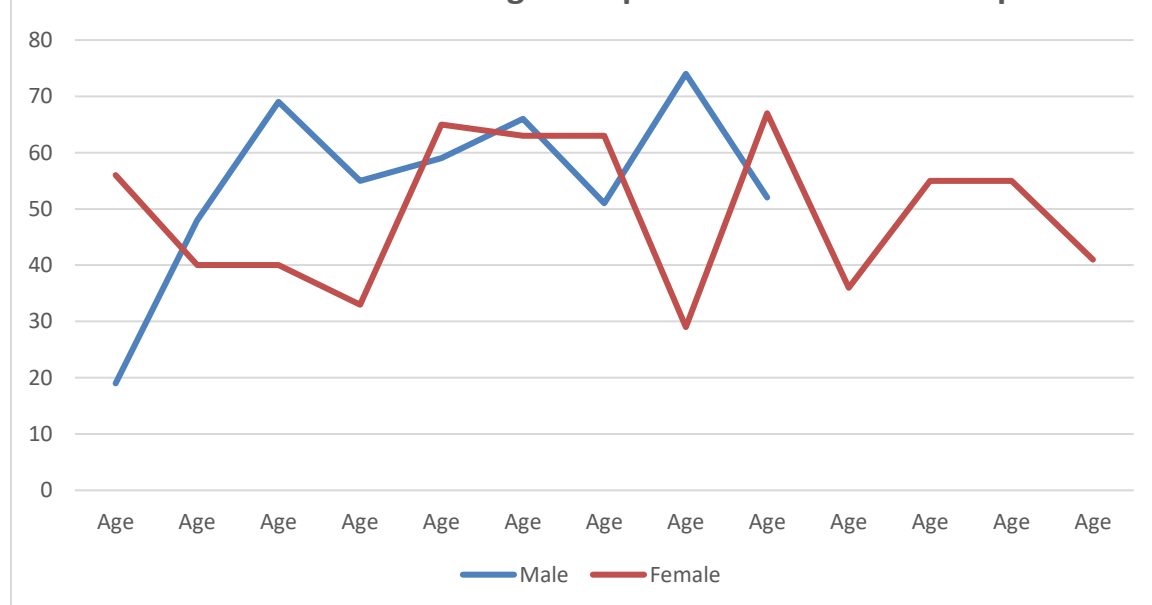
*Control Group.* Twenty-five (25) volunteers participated in the Control Group. Each Control Group member completed an Experiences of Violence survey during the morning worship service on Sunday, July 9, 2017 (see Appendix A). Of the 25 persons who participated in the Control Group, 10 were male; 14 were female; and one person did not identify his/her gender or age (see Chart 1).

**Chart 1: Gender Composition of Control Group**

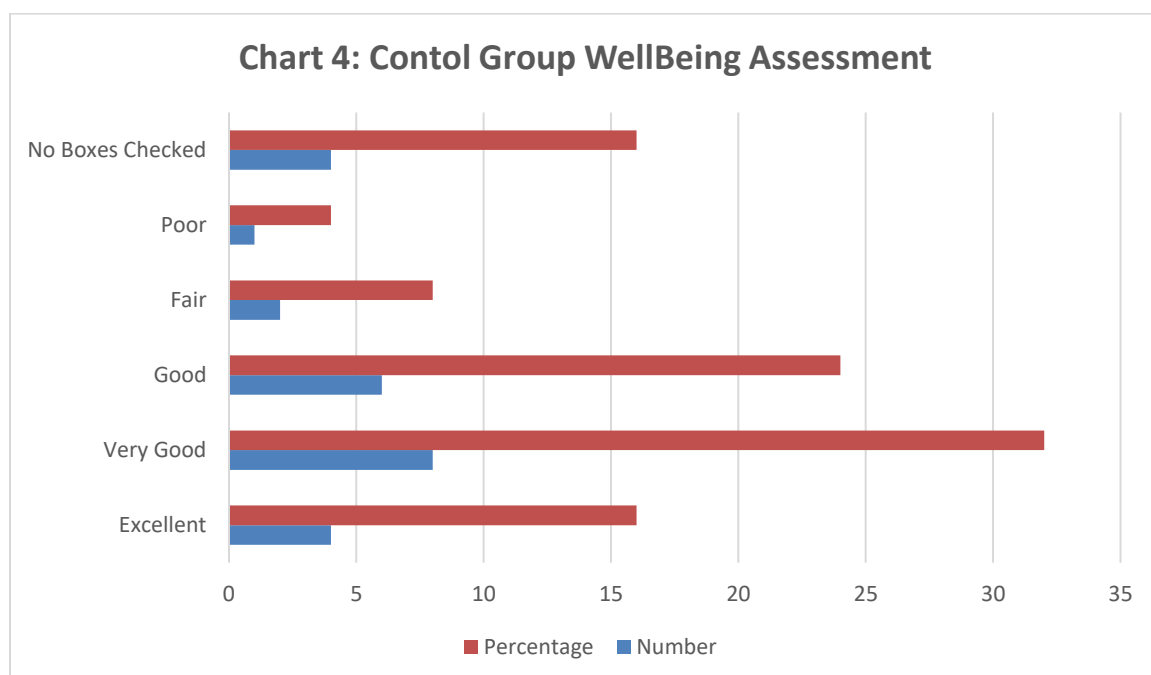
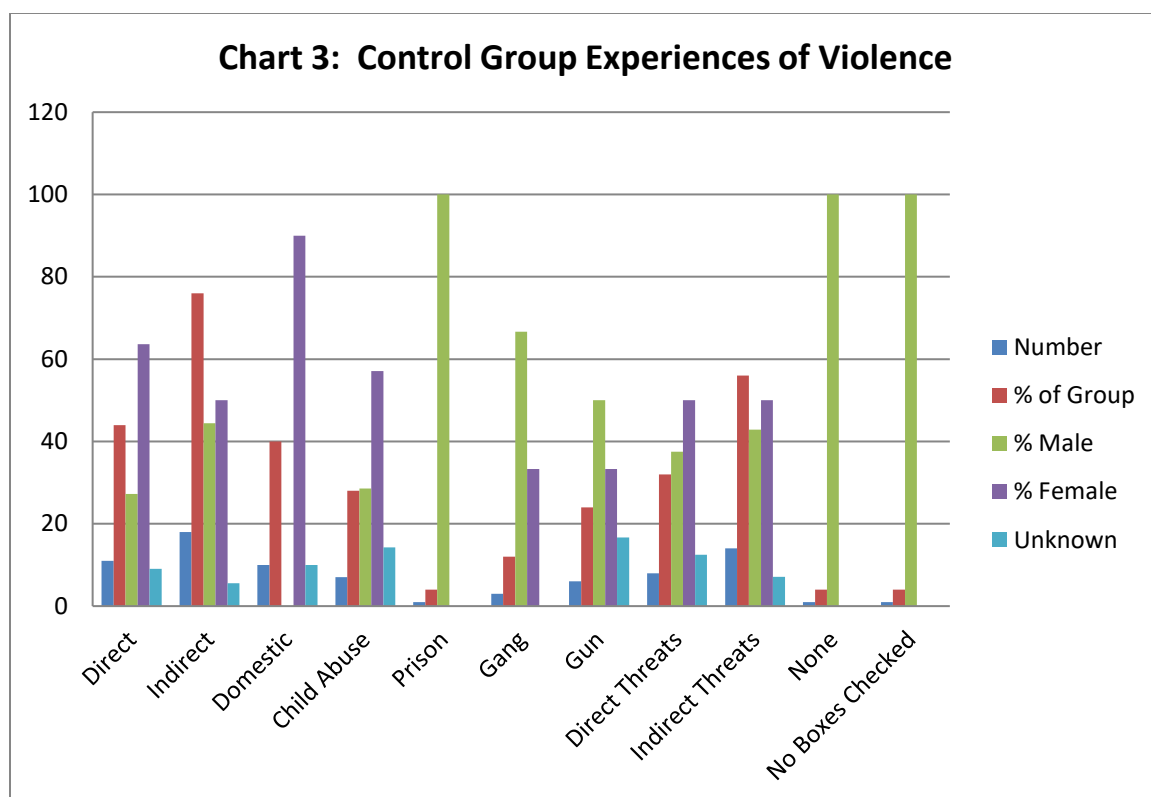


Control Group participants ranged in age from 19 to 74 (see Chart 2). All Control Group members identified themselves as Black or African American and Christian except for the one person (previously mentioned) who did not list his/her age, gender or religion and one additional male who did not list his faith tradition.

**Chart 2: Gender and Age Composition of Control Group**



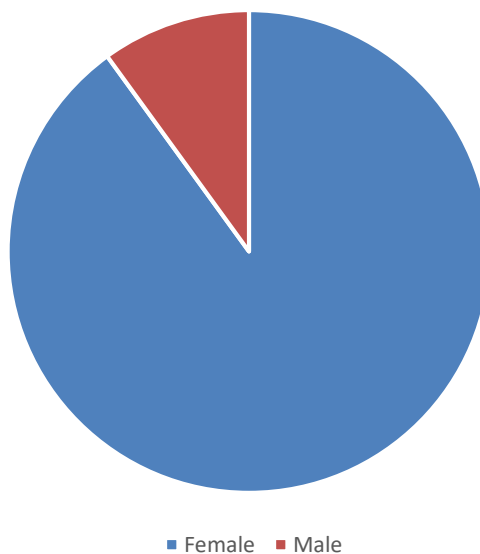
Members of the Control Group reported their experiences of violence as follows. One person (4%) reported no violence. Eleven (44%) reported direct violence while 19 (76%) denoted indirect violence. Eleven persons (44%) had experienced domestic violence and six (24%) noted child abuse. One case of prison violence was selected representing 4%. Three participants (12%) reported gang violence and six (24%) denoted gun violence. Eight (32%) reported receiving direct threats while 14 (56%) signified indirect threats (see Chart 3). Control Group members reported a variety of effects of violence upon their lives including but not limited to: (1) PTSD; (2) emotional, spiritual, and mental damage; (3) anger; (4) lack of trust in judicial system; (5) personal and family substance abuse issues; (6) depression; (7) homelessness; (8) cautiousness; (9) low self-esteem; and (10) over protectiveness of offspring. In terms of their overall sense of wellbeing, four (16%) Control Group members reported Excellent ratings; eight (32%) scored themselves as Very Good; six (24%) said their wellbeing was Good; two (8%) denoted they were doing Fair; one (4%) reported a Poor rating; and four (16%) persons did not check any of the boxes (see Chart 4).



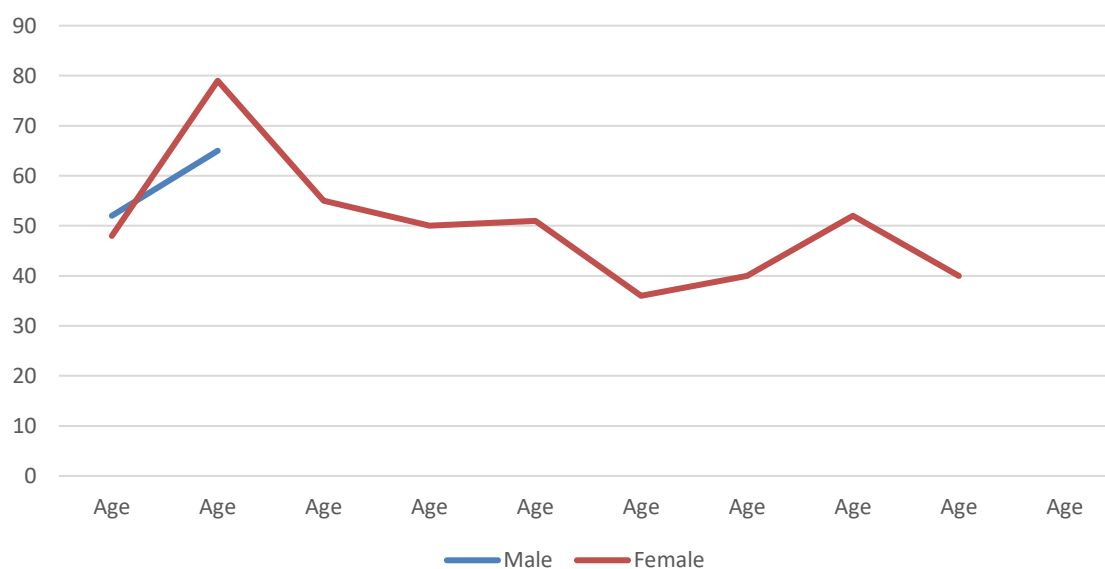
*Research Group.* Eleven (11) volunteers participated in the Research Group, all identifying themselves as Black or African American and Christian. Nine members of

the Research Group were female and two were male, ranging in age from 36 to 79 (see Charts 5 and 6, respectively).

**Chart 5: Gender Composition of Research Group**



**Chart 6: Gender and Age Composition of Research Group**





These persons each completed a Research Group Pre-Interview Survey through which the following experiences of violence were acknowledged:

7 reports of direct violence (63.6%)

8 indications of indirect violence (72.7%)

5 experienced domestic violence (45.45%)

4 reports of child abuse (36.36%)

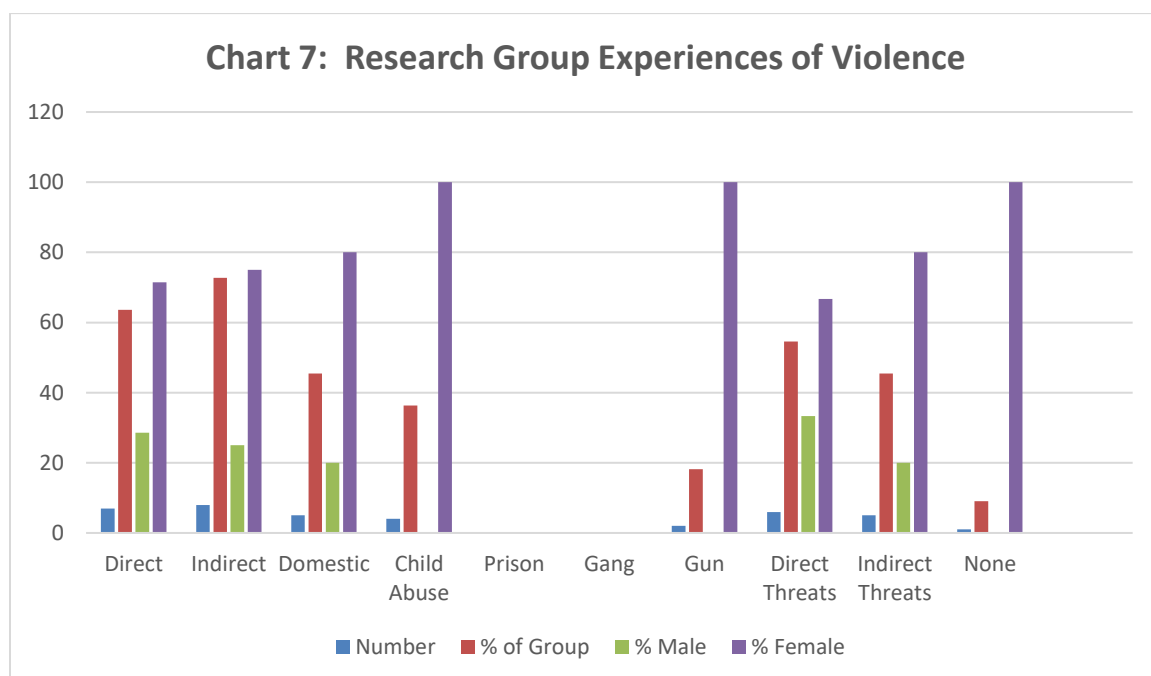
0 reports of prison violence and gang violence (0%)

2 indications of gun violence (18.18%)

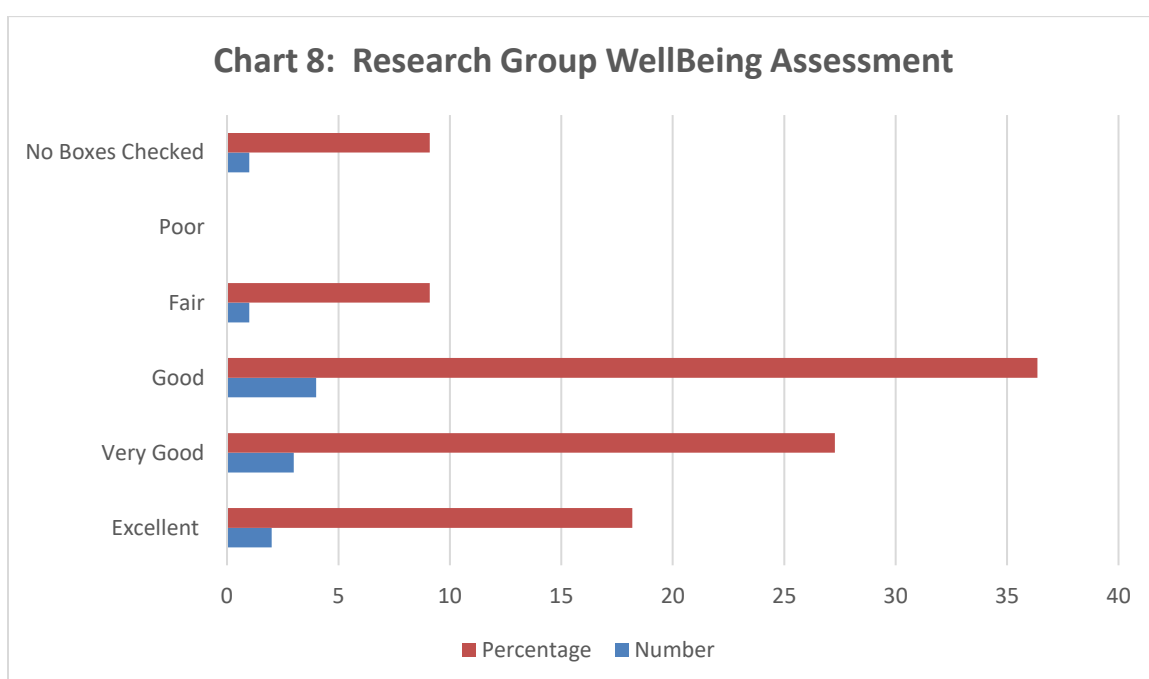
6 denotations of direct threats (54.54%)

6 representations of indirect threats (54.54%)

Additionally, one person (9.09%) checked none of the boxes relating to experiences of violence (see Chart 7).



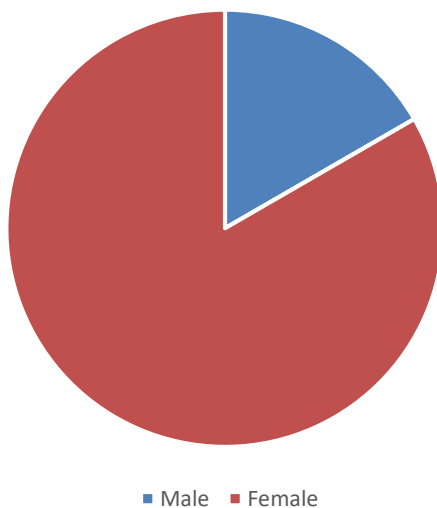
Effects of violence denoted by the Research Group show anger, PTSD, jail, miscarriage, loss of faith, depression, trust issues, fear, anxiety, difficulty giving and receiving love, and/or violent approach to others especially verbally. Research Group participants reported their overall senses of wellbeing as Excellent (2 or 18.18%), Very Good (3 or 27.27%), Good (4 or 36.36%), and Fair (1 or 9.09%) (see Chart 8). None of the participants designated their wellbeing as poor. Additionally, one participant failed to check either of the boxes on this part of the pre-test survey.



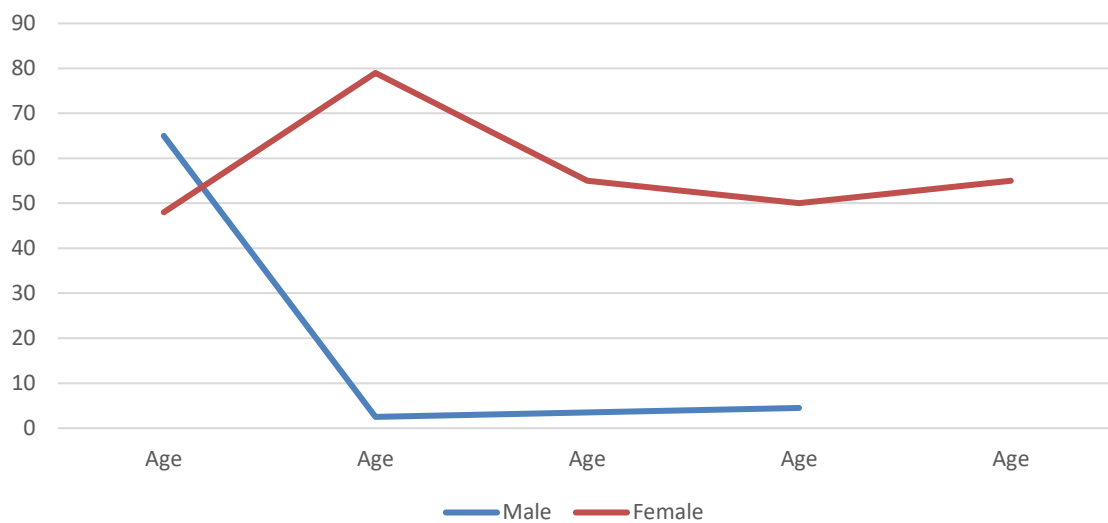
Six (6) members of the Research Group completed the Post-Workshop Participation Survey including five females and one male (see Chart 9). Ages ranged from 48 to 79 (see Chart 10). The following incidences and frequencies of violence were reported: 3 direct (50%), 4 indirect (66.67%), 3 domestic (50%), 0 child abuse, 0 prison, 0 gang, 1 gun (16.67%), 3 direct threats (50%), 2 indirect threats (33.33%). One

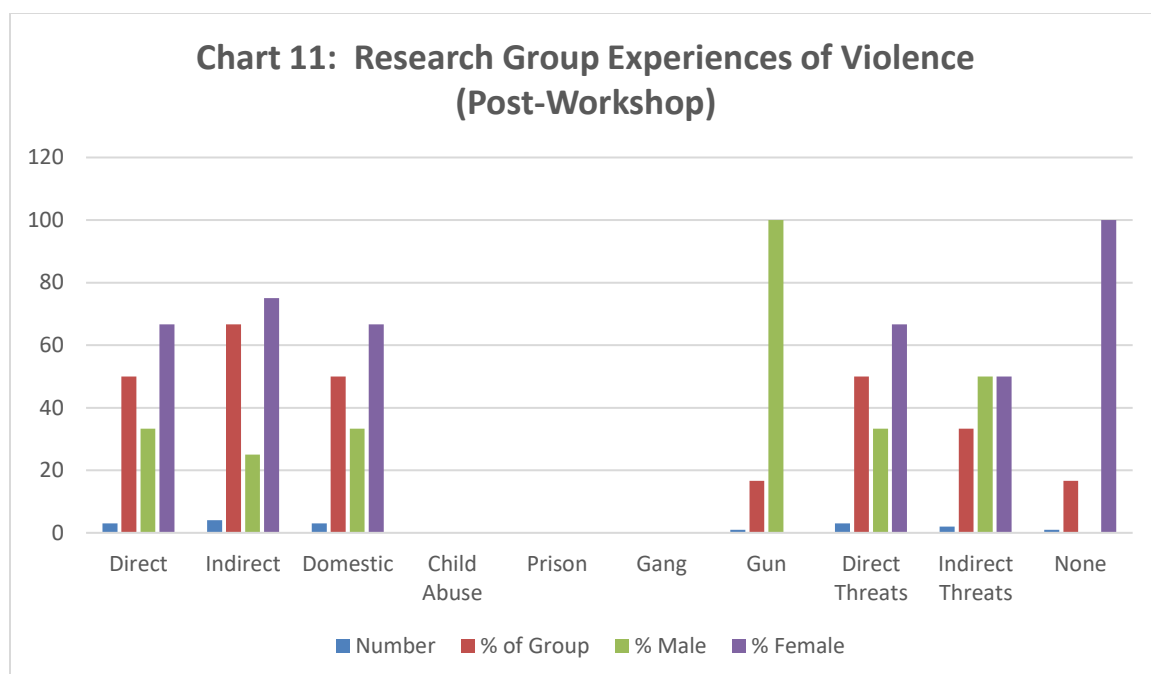
participant did not check any of the boxes pertaining to experiences of violence (see Chart 11)

**Chart 9: Gender Composition of Research Group  
(Post-Workshop)**

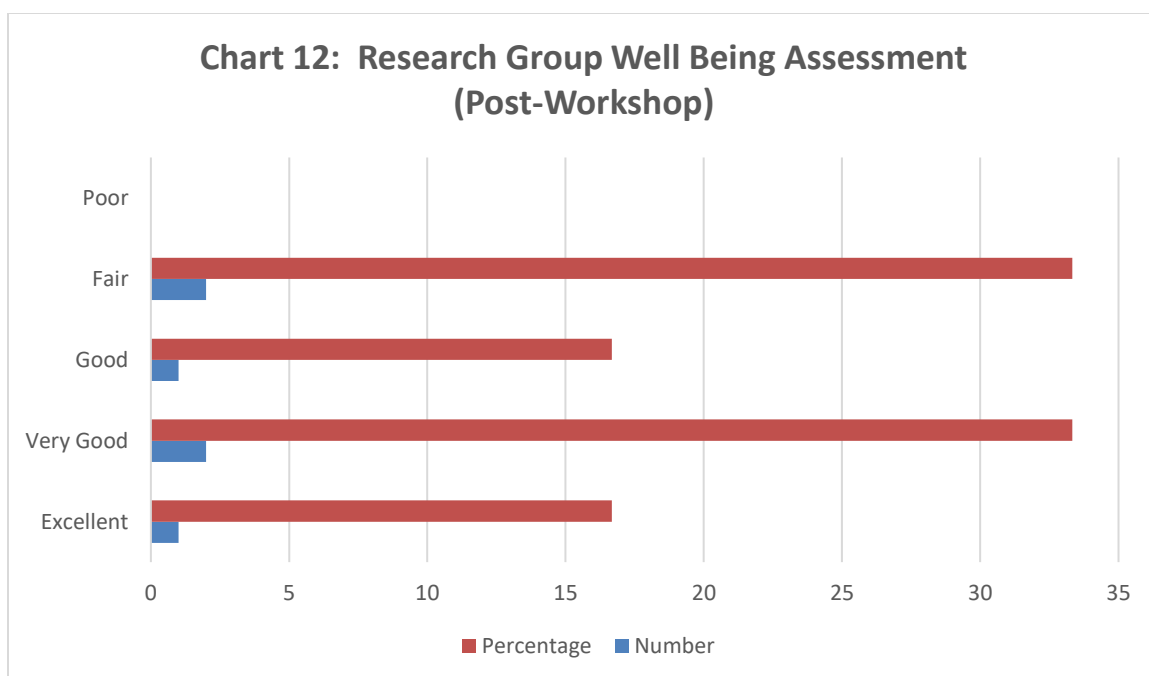


**Chart 10: Gender and Age Composition of Research Group  
(Post-Workshop)**





As far as overall senses of wellbeing, one participant designated an Excellent rating (16.67%); two reported being Very Good (33.33%); one person rated him/herself as Good (16.67%); and two reported a Fair rating (33.33%). None of the Research Group participants reported a Poor sense of wellbeing (see Chart 12). All participants stated they would recommend participation in the project to others. Of the six Research Group members who completed the Post-Workshop Survey, four were persons with whom researcher conducted individual interviews.



*Interviews.* Interviews ranged in length from 41 minutes to approximately 1.25 hours. Six Research Group participants signed up to do individual interviews and five persons participated. One person was a no call, no show. Of the five interviewees, one was male and the other four were female (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Interviewee Data**

	Gender	Age	Length of Interview
Interviewee #1	Male	65	1 hour 12 minutes
Interviewee #2	Female	55	1 hour 13 minutes
Interviewee #3	Female	55	47 minutes
Interviewee #4	Female	48	45 minutes
Interviewee #5	Female	51	41 minutes

## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The theological rationale for this project rests upon the biblical/theological concepts of soteriology and the missiology of the church. Both notions will be discussed more fully in the sections that follow.

#### ***Soteriology***

For this study, the words soteriology, salvation, deliverance, and redemption are used interchangeably. Augustine speaks of soteriology in terms of Christ's mediation between God and humankind.<sup>37</sup> For Irenaeus, salvation equals God's recapitulation of Adam in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>38</sup> Connolly envisions the relationship between God and humanity fully restored to harmony.<sup>39</sup> Middleton and Gorman define soteriology as humankind's restoration to God, each other, and the world<sup>40</sup> For the aforementioned authors, salvation is Christocentric (see John 14:6); theocentric (see Romans 1:16); part of a larger narrative pertaining to God's restoration of the world to a new order and covenant; and a corporate reality (salvation for all humanity).<sup>41</sup> Barth speaks about

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<sup>37</sup> Saint Augustine. *Confessions*. (London: Penguin Books, 1961), 250.

<sup>38</sup> Denis Minns, "Irenaeus," *Early Christian Thinkers: The Lives and Legacies of Twelve Key Figures* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 36-51.

<sup>39</sup> Michele A. Connolly, "Soteriology," *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume 5. Ed. By Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 358.

<sup>40</sup> J. Richard Middleton and Michael J. Gorman, "Salvation," *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume 5. Ed. by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 45-61

<sup>41</sup> Middleton and Gorman, 54.

soteriology in terms of humankind's redemption.<sup>42</sup> When humans are redeemed, they are no longer bound by whatever held them captive. "He no longer belongs to that which had a right over him, to that realm of curse, death and hell; he is translated into the kingdom of God's dear son."<sup>43</sup> For Gutierrez, salvation and liberation are inextricably linked together socially, economically, and politically.<sup>44</sup> Cone expounds that salvation contains four elements: vertical, horizontal, historical, and eschatological.<sup>45</sup> Cone's vertical element points to humankind's relationship with God while the horizontal refers to humans' relationships with each other. The historical and eschatological elements of Cone's soteriology respectively designate humanity's struggle for freedom throughout the ages and its hope for eschatological salvation.

The Passover narrative contained in Exodus 24:1-42 provides one of the most exemplary illustrations of soteriology in the Old Testament text. God's people cry out to God for help and God delivers them through the Passover event. What takes place at this juncture becomes a defining event for the children of Israel and provides the foundation for Christ's redemption of all humanity through his death at the cross.

Approaching the Passover passage from an academic perspective, however, proves challenging. The historicity of Exodus offers few if any references outside the

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<sup>42</sup> Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1959), 121.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>44</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998), 91.

<sup>45</sup> James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, Revised Edition (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 129-149.

biblical text in support of its authenticity.<sup>46</sup> Scholars opine that Moses, the presumed author, draws from a variety of manuscripts including the J, P, and E sources in compiling the account, all of which are difficult to pinpoint and/or substantiate. Despite the biblical criticism issues scholars raise, Strawn asserts that, not only is Exodus the most important book in the holy writ, but its narratives boldly proclaim that God's gracious deliverance precedes God's law.<sup>47</sup> Fretheim supports Strawn's assertions, augmenting those views by drawing his audience's attention to the fact that God calls God's people to full obedience after the law is given.<sup>48</sup> Meyers discusses the minimalist and maximalist views of the historicity of the children of Israel with the rationalization that no one can reconstruct the history of any period. She states that how one interprets past events is grounded in what is happening in one's life at the time the event is exegeted in conjunction with that person's past and present experiences.<sup>49</sup> Hubbard and Johnston purport a form of critical analysis termed *believing criticism*. With this method, sacred writings are held in high regard as one grapples with its contents in light of recent

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<sup>46</sup> James K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, New International Biblical Commentary, Vol. 2 Ed. by Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. and Robert K. Johnston (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 10; Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 5; Carole L. Meyers, *Exodus*. The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2-10; and Ralph L. Smith, *Exodus*. The Holman Bible Dictionary Ed. by Trent C. Butler (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 451;

<sup>47</sup> Brent A. Strawn, "Exodus," *The New Interpreter's Bible: One Volume Commentary*, Ed. by Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 34.

<sup>48</sup> Fretheim, 22.

<sup>49</sup> Meyers, 10-12.



discoveries and new trains of thought.<sup>50</sup> Assman coins the term *mnemohistory* to explain the effect one's memory has on history and to provide credence for the commemorative aspects of past events in scholarly research.<sup>51</sup> In arriving at a hermeneutical understanding of the Passover narrative, one must hold these scholarly viewpoints in tension with one's careful reading of the text.

As part of the Passover account, God provides a set of instructions to the Israelites that relates to their redemption. Exodus 12:24-28 speaks specifically to the use of storytelling within this project. God places responsibility on God's people to ensure that the story of their deliverance is retold annually and throughout future generations.

You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' You shall say 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed down and worshiped. The Israelites went and did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. (Exodus 12:24-28, *New Revised Standard Version*)

Not only does God command frequent, futuristic storytelling, but also gives instructions for re-enactment of how God delivered Israel from bondage when the narrative is retold. The Passover ritual dramatizes and reinforces the storyline. The foods that comprise the Seder meal symbolize important elements of the story, i.e. the lamb (redemption through sacrifice requiring bloodshed), bitter herbs (Israel's enslavement), unleavened bread (Israel's hurried departure from Egypt), egg (new life in the Promised Land), etc. The

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<sup>50</sup> Bruckner, xii.

<sup>51</sup> Jan Assman, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 8-22.

above-referenced text along with accompanying instructions immediately preceding and following it simultaneously include theology, liturgy, narrative, and law.<sup>52</sup> God is worthy of worship and obedience because Yahweh honors divine covenant and delivers people in response to their pleas.

To continually retell the Passover story links the Jews' story of liberation to the historical event. It also joins persons to the present reality that God provides salvation then, now, and in the future. Further, the Passover narrative provides an illustration of God's salvific work in the lives of God's people throughout various times in history. The storytelling takes on a sacramental quality that honors the stories of those who personally witnessed God's salvation while it intersects with the lives of persons who look to God to liberate them. Because the Passover story presents such a profound model of soteriology, it continues to be used as a symbol of freedom for those who are bound and/or marginalized.<sup>53</sup> The power of storytelling in shaping one's existentiality and future provides a point of departure for this body of research.

God's liberation of those who are enslaved in Egypt as presented in the Passover text contains spiritual, social, economic, and political implications. God institutes an annual, liturgical ritual that connects the Israelites to God spiritually. From the standpoint of liberation theology, oppression constitutes sin. Therefore, when God delivers the Israelites from slavery, they experience redemption from the forces of evil that come against God's intended salvation for them and all humankind.<sup>54</sup> God also

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<sup>52</sup> Fretheim, 6-10.

<sup>53</sup> Cone, 57; Gutierrez, 86.

<sup>54</sup> Middleton and Gorman, 48.

brings about social transformation. “The odd claim of this literature is that social transformation of revolutionary proportion is wrought through the holy intentionality of a ‘new God’ . . . whose name is known only in and through this wondrous happening.”<sup>55</sup> The aforementioned quotation reflects the sentiments of previously referenced liberation theologians who tie freedom to social, economic, and/or political action. When God releases the children of Israel from slavery, a shift in the Egyptians’ political structure takes place. God moves on behalf of God’s people and the once empowered Egyptian Pharaoh becomes powerless as he faces the power of the God of Israel. God’s power versus Pharaoh’s power shifts the political dynamic in such a way that a defining historical moment takes place. God’s people get set free and their emancipation negatively effects the economy of Egypt. With its massive, free labor pool gone, the Egyptian government now must incur expenditures which drive the price of manufacturing its gross domestic product upward, while driving the net profits from the sale of these goods downward.

Not only does the Passover narrative serve as liturgically defining as a salvific work and act of liberation, but the story also demonstrates pastoral qualities. Through Moses and Aaron, God provides care for God’s people who cry out in distress. When the Jews tell and retell the story, God appropriates new meaning to readers and hearers at different stages in history. Wimberly shifts his image of pastoral care from that of

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<sup>55</sup> Walter Brueggemann, “Exodus,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible: General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for Each Book of the Bible including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books in Twelve Volumes*. Volume 1 Ed. by Leander Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 679.

Wounded Healer to an image of the biblical text as pastoral caregiver.<sup>56</sup> In so doing, he inspires pastors to draw from their reservoirs of narrative resources and share conflict-free, personal stories with care recipients. Not only can pastoral caregivers draw from their own life narratives, but they can also lean upon stories within the biblical context.

The Passover narrative has been used by black pastors in the United States along the continuum of African American history. During times of slavery, Jim Crow, the Great Migration, and the Civil Rights era, the story of the Passover has proved a provocative illustration of how God provides pastoral care for God's people. The Passover account gives rise to liturgical celebration in black churches as its storyline intersects with proclamation of the Word, an individual and/or collective hermeneutical exegesis, and black parishioners' existentialities. That God delivers Israel reinforces the possibility that God can and will deliver others whenever the sequence of events is retold. When Christian churches provide violence victims a place where their stories can be heard and told, redemption becomes a genuine possibility not only for storytellers but for those who listen to those stories as well.

### ***The Missiology of the Church***

Within this project, the terms missiology, mission, and missions are used compatibly in terms of the ecclesial body's responsibility to advance the Kingdom of God by spreading the gospel in word and deed. The World Council of Churches asserts that the church is called to proclaim the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit with all people.<sup>57</sup> For this body, soteriology and missiology seem tied to each other.

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<sup>56</sup> Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care Revised Edition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 111-112.

26. God's purpose in creation is distorted by human sin, failure and disobedience to God's will and by rebellion against him (cf. Gen 3-4; om 1:18-320). Sin damages the relationship between God, human beings and the created order. But God persists in faithfulness despite the sin and error of the people. The dynamic history of God's restoring and increasing koinonia reaches its culmination and fulfilment in the perfect communion of a new heaven and a new earth established by Jesus Christ (cf. Rev 21).<sup>58</sup>

For Schnabel, missiology is what a community of faith does to spread its beliefs in response to its faith and convictions.<sup>59</sup> Nyasulu defines missiology as "the study of the foundation, the spread, and the growth of Christian mission from the Old Testament up to the present day."<sup>60</sup> Oborji speaks of missiology as a theological discipline that encompasses both mission (God's plan to bring salvation to all humankind) and missions (the church's activities as an instrument of God to bring God's divine plans into reality).<sup>61</sup>

Oborji encourages missionaries to become sensitive to the context within which the gospel is spread by listening to others' theologies and showing respect for their cultures. He also admonishes persons in third world countries to refrain from attacking

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<sup>57</sup> World Council of Churches, "Faith and Order Paper 198," *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005), 22.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>59</sup> Eckhard Schnabel, "Missions," *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume 4. Ed. by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 111-114.

<sup>60</sup> Timothy Nyasulu, *Missiology: A Study of the Spread of the Christian Faith* (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2004), 9.

<sup>61</sup> Francis Anekwe Oborji, *Concepts of Mission: The Evolution of Contemporary Missiology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006), 41-43.

missionaries from the Western world. Power dynamics come into play when dominant Western cultures evangelize persons outside the realms of their cultural and economic experiences. Because colonization, Christology, and church missiology have often been tied together politically, distrust and exploitation have occurred which have both inhibited contemporary missionary efforts.<sup>62</sup> Distrust may also occur when one considers the power dynamics present within the framework of missional efforts on a smaller scale in communities where church members and unchurched residents coexist. Therefore, in instituting and analyzing this project, attention will be given to the power dynamics involved in the church's current and future mission efforts.

Brueggemann expounds missiology through use of a welcoming metaphor in which Christians invite to the table those who are rejected, broken, poor, exiled, displaced, outsiders, and insiders.<sup>63</sup> He offers that the contemporary church employ the use of dialogue as it invites others to commune with it and with God.<sup>64</sup> Brueggemann's stance presents a paradigm for consideration for participants in this project. When persons share their life stories and listen to those of others, exchange of ideas ensues. That conversation then becomes a means of welcoming others to the table that Brueggemann imagines.

Schnabel asserts that the Old Testament presents the gospel as an ideal to be hoped for rather than the New Testament command that it be spread.<sup>65</sup> While the Old

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 203-205.

<sup>63</sup> Walter Brueggemann. *Mandate to Difference: An Invitation to the Contemporary Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 51.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 73-74.

Testament does not speak specifically to spreading Judaism to non-Jews, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 support the spread of Judaism to subsequent generations which can be considered missional. The afore-mentioned scriptures support a methodology of spreading the Jewish faith through liturgy and storytelling. Leviticus 19:18 commands love of neighbor and Exodus 20:3-17 contains the Decalogue which attests to mission when one considers a person's obedience to God as a means of spreading the tenets of one's faith. The Old Testament text also explicates missiology through its mandates for compassion towards widows, orphans, the poor, and/or strangers (see Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 14:28; 24:19-21; Psalm 82:3; Proverbs 14:31; Isaiah 10:1; Jeremiah 7:6; 22:3). The New Testament commands the spread of the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 13:10; 14:9; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; and Acts 1:8). In the gospel writings, commandments to love others point directly to missions through deeds (John 13:34-35 and Matthew 22:37-40). The latter texts tie the missiology of the church to Old Testament passages whose principles expound the same, i.e. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Leviticus 19:8.

Hiltner's metaphorical description of the Christian church addresses church missiology when he defines the church as the body of Christ, a covenant community, and the household of faith.<sup>65</sup> As the body of Christ, all members are to be sensitive to the needs of others and treat each other with dignity and respect. When persons hear others' stories in such a way that honors the storyteller as a child of God, the hearers and

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<sup>65</sup> Schnabel, 112-113.

<sup>66</sup> Seward Hiltner. *Theological Dynamics*. (Abingdon Press, Nashville: 1972), 108-119.

listeners become one as their stories intersect. Hiltner states that as a covenant community, “[T]he church exists . . . because God called it into existence. It was a result of his initiative, not simply a human idea.”<sup>67</sup> Hiltner’s idea runs parallel to Migliore’s definition of baptism as incorporation which depicts that Christians are in covenant with Christ and each other.<sup>68</sup> As a covenant community, one of the church’s central goals is to live out its missiology. Finally, Hiltner’s household of faith metaphor points to the church’s mission of developing and sustaining intimate relationships with God and others. Migliore calls this concept “*maturing in solidarity*.”<sup>69</sup> This project endeavored to connect its participants to God and each other as they shared their life stories with one another. Researcher’s ideal was that as participants identified intersections between their stories and those of others, participants would connect and/or reconnect to the church’s missiology of spreading the gospel through word and especially deed.

The New Testament parable of the Good Samaritan contained in Luke 10:25-37 distinguishes Luke’s gospel from the other synoptics and provides an illustration of church missiology in praxis.

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life.” He said to him “what is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer: do this, and you will live.”

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel L. Migliore. *Faith Seeking Understanding*. Kindle Edition. (Grand Rapids: Eerdsman’s Publishing Company, 2004), 5683.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 4917.



But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “the one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

(*New Revised Standard Version*). While most scholars agree Luke uses two sources, Mark and Q, in developing his writing, Evans supports an additional source, the Septuagint.<sup>70</sup> In the above-referenced passage, an expert in Jewish law asks Jesus a question about soteriology, “[W]hat must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus responds by quoting the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:5) along with Leviticus 19:8. Further engaging Jesus in conversation, the lawyer asks Jesus for a selective clarification of who his neighbor is.<sup>71</sup> Jesus replies with a universal, theologically reflective story that highlights church missiology, using three persons’ responses to a victim of violence to broaden the audience’s definition of neighbor. The parable does not address the roots of violence in

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<sup>70</sup> Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, New International Biblical Commentary, Vol. 3 Ed. by W. Ward Gasque (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 4; Francois Bovon, *Luke 2*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Ed. By Helmut Koester, Trans. By Donald S. Deer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 53; B. Alan Culpepper, *Luke*, New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. IX, Ed. by Michael E. Lawrence (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, 7-8; Richard B. Vinson, *Luke*, Smith & Helwys Bible Commentary Ed. by R. Scott Nash (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2008), 5-6.

<sup>71</sup> Evans, 175.

society nor the source of apathy in the religious leaders. Rather, the underlying issue of the parable is how one behaves in response to one in need.<sup>72</sup> The parable illustrates the church's appropriate, dutiful, Christian response, or mission by placing ethical obedience above obedience to religious ritual.<sup>73</sup> Obedience to God makes service to one's neighbor mandatory.<sup>74</sup>

The abovementioned Lukan narrative was chosen as a biblical grounding for this project because the victim in the story is a victim of violence and parallels the lives of research participants.<sup>75</sup> Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question defines the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) and widens its context.<sup>76</sup> Christians have a responsibility not only to identify persons in need, but also to investigate, assess, and provide a neighborly response that facilitates healing. To drive home his theme of Christian mission through doing, Luke uses the least likely character in Jesus' parable as the epitome of Christian mission. Instead of the Rabbi or the Levite, the Samaritan is the one who tends to the needs of the violence victim in a manner that requires personal sacrifice and allocation of resources. The Samaritan interrupts his travel plans and takes five sacrificial steps on behalf of the violence victim. He: (1) dresses the victim's

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<sup>72</sup> Vinson, 342.

<sup>73</sup> Bovon, 55.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>75</sup> To my amazement and through the lens of a respected faculty member/advisor following the project's culmination, I realized that the victim of violence in this text is silent even though one of the project's goals was to encourage violence victims to tell their stories. Therefore, I will address this anomaly at a subsequent juncture within this writing.

<sup>76</sup> Vinson, 343.

wounds; (2) transports him elsewhere; (3) arranges for lodging; (4) pays two denarii; and (5) promises to follow up with the innkeeper on his return trip and settle any outstanding charges.<sup>77</sup> This narrative brings the church face to face with its failure to minister healing to victims of violence. Present though invisible within this text reside the unnamed persons connected indirectly with the violence victim--his family members, friends, residents of his neighborhood, and possibly members of his faith community. This project provided participants with an opportunity to be neighbors to each other. Through storytelling, participants had an opportunity to discover commonalities in their life stories with those of others. My vision was that research participants would apply what they learned and experienced during the project to brainstorm ways the church might provide care to violence victims. My vision was also as participants learned about, utilized, and envisioned how the church could use storytelling to help others, they would engage in and further church missiology.

While in dialogue with a respected advisor after this project concluded, I discovered that the victim of violence in the parable of the Good Samaritan remains silent throughout the entire story line. Though I've pondered how this could have occurred repeatedly, I have drawn only observations but no conclusions on this matter. Instead of focusing on the victim of violence and hearing from him, the writer of the text, the Christian faith tradition, and I focused on the behavioral responses of the three characters that encounter him. That I did not consider the silence of the victim until my senior colleague pointed it out to me caused me to ponder what this means for me and others as

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<sup>77</sup> Bovon, 59.

it pertains to church missiology and hearing the stories of victims of violence for which I advocate in this project.

Writing from a social justice perspective, Ellison offers a viewpoint which provides implications for church missiology as it pertains to persons one encounters.<sup>78</sup> I find his point of reference helpful for me and possibly for the Christian church as we continue to grapple with the phenomenon of silence in violence victims and in being intentional about hearing their stories. With his three feet challenge, Ellison encourages readers to effect change in the persons they encounter within three feet of the space around them. According to this innovative author, to effect change one must see the gifts in other people, hear value in their stories, and work toward change in themselves and others. Ellison states:

When ordinary individuals fearlessly commit to changing the three feet around them, the tectonic plates of a community shift. Finally, *Fearless Dialogues* creates crucible moments for time-bending transformation that emerge when human interaction collides with divine intervention. In these rare moments, the past is reframed, future possibilities appear attainable, the present is energized with hope, and the kingdom of God descends to earth.<sup>79</sup>

Ellison expounds upon his three feet challenge by using a radical hospitality paradigm in which he inspires his audiences to press beyond their fear of strangers. The writer classifies strangers into four categories: (1) Public Strangers who occupy common spaces but are not known to each other; (2) Familiar Strangers who occupy the same spaces with each other, have not uttered a word to each other, yet they are comforted by

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<sup>78</sup> Gregory C. Ellison II. *Fearless Dialogues: A New Movement for Justice*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 13.

each other's presence and alerted by each other's absence; (3) Intimate Strangers who he describes as persons who don't know each other but extend themselves for the common good; and (4) The Stranger Within which points to the inner parts of our own being that we have not yet come to know. Ellison classifies the Good Samaritan as an Intimate Stranger because he takes risks and extends himself for the common good of the violence victim. Ellison's ultimate premise guides readers to create and embrace a Welcome Table that extends to all regardless of station or status. His views here are in close alignment with the sentiments of Brueggemann's welcome table motif mentioned in this body writing in an earlier segment.<sup>80</sup> For Ellison, however, we must press ourselves beyond just sitting there together so we can see, hear, and change.

Though I missed this nuance of the silent violence victim in the text initially, its presence gives credence to the rationale for this study. Often the Christian church might miss the essence of what Ellison purports as we reach out to help persons in need. Though our intentions are good, often we might fail to hear from persons what their specific needs are. The Good Samaritan in the story presents a model of how one might minister to the mugged traveler. However, how does one know what the victim's most important felt needs are unless he/she is asked and engaged in dialogue? Often in church missiology, we go out of our way to give persons what they need according to the conclusions we draw about them based on our own assessments of their situations. Perhaps, however, our ministry to those in need would be much more profound and helpful if we would take the time to listen to them, hear what their greatest needs are, and

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<sup>80</sup> Brueggemann, 73-74.

respond accordingly. We have no way of knowing whether there was a conversation between the Good Samaritan in this text and the violence victim as the story does not provide those details. Perhaps what the helper provided was sufficient. However, the possibility exists that what was needed was more than a meeting of the victim's physical needs. Perhaps what the mugged traveler needed most was some type of spiritual connection in his life. As Ellison posits, only when we take the time to see gifts in other people, hear value in their stories, and work toward change in ourselves and others can we begin to effect real, lasting societal changes. As Christians engaging in church missiology, we need to listen to those we encounter more so we can advance the Kingdom of God more effectively. Storytelling provides a point of intersection for the lives of storytellers and listeners (pastoral caregivers). Storytelling also provides a means for listeners to hear the heart felt pressing needs of victims in such a way that we can tailor our responses to meet persons' needs in ways that are meaningful to them.

Discussion of the biblical and theological rationale for this project turns one's attention to reflect upon how culture and context impact theology. That the composition of St. Paul's membership is primarily African American warrants a few words about one's social location and how it impacts how one hears and interprets biblical passages. Andrews traces the history of black theology and asserts that African Americans interpret biblical passages through ideologies that inform their cultural mores.<sup>81</sup> Black theology holds dichotomies like hope and despair, justice and injustice, the sacred and the profane,

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<sup>81</sup> Dale P. Andrews, "African American Practical Theology," *Opening the Field of Practical Theology*, Ed. by Kathleen A. Cahalan and Gordon S. Mikoski (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 11-12.

oppression and freedom, and church faithfulness versus communal faithfulness in tension with each other. Out of those tensions, black persons contextually appropriate meanings of the sacred text that speak to their own practicalities. Culture and existentiality inform the black perspective which cannot be separated from the experiences of oppression and violence that characterize black life. Andrews suggests that black theology approaches the biblical text with a hermeneutic of suspicion akin to that of womanist theologians. Black theology raises questions regarding whose interest is served through certain interpretations of the text. When conducting and subsequently analyzing this project, careful attention was placed upon the project's contextual aspects and their possible impact upon its outcomes.

## CHAPTER 4

### CRITICAL EVALUATION

*Assessment of the Project.* As previously mentioned, a violent gun battle took place within a few feet of St. Paul a few weeks prior to inception of the project. I opined that this experience of violence would have sparked discussion about the event within the Research Group. However, the occurrence was not mentioned except for when I broached the subject during one of the workshops. Though I extended invitations for participation to family members of persons involved in and/or affected by the event, none of those invitees responded. One of the factors that might have contributed to the absence of these persons as participants might have been that they were not yet ready to talk about their experiences.<sup>82</sup>

More women than men participated in both the Control Group and the Research Group. Of the male Research Group participants, one volunteered to tell his story and have it recorded. Further, only one male completed the Post-Workshop Experiences of Violence survey since he was the only male present at the closing workshop session. That more females than males participated in the project might be tied to the demographic composition of St. Paul since women in the congregation outnumber men. Males might also have been prohibited from participation due to their work schedules because some of the men of St. Paul work swing shifts or at night. Initially, workshops were planned to take place on Sundays following morning worship. However, this plan

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<sup>82</sup> Cox, 109-120.



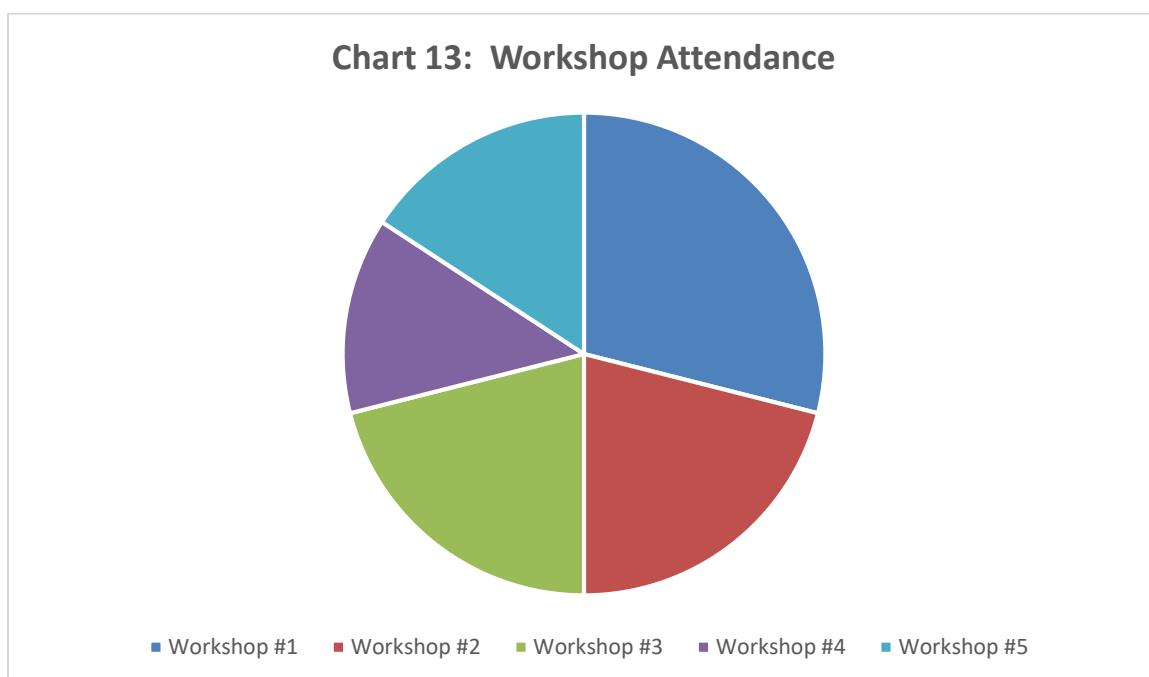
was altered due to my change in pastoral assignments. Although members of the Research Group selected the day and time on which they would like to meet for workshop sessions, this determination was made at the first workshop which was held on a Thursday night. Consequently, some of the persons who might have wanted to participate were not able to have a voice in the scheduling process since they were unavailable.

The mean age of the Control Group was 52.4 while the median age was 55. The mean age of Research Group participants was 51.9 with a median age of 51. The mean age of the Research Group members who took the post-workshop survey was 58.6 while the median was 55. These statistics reflect the demographic makeup of St. Paul whose composition follows the same trend. Younger Research Group participants attended no workshops following the first one which affected both the mean and median of the Research Group who completed the Post Workshop Survey. Each young adult participant called and/or send a text message on the day that the second workshop was scheduled and stated reasons for their absence. One person reported a change in her work schedule; one reported her child had a game she had to attend; and one reported she had no babysitter for the evening. I did not hear from any of the younger absentees following the second workshop except for one who scheduled and confirmed an individual interview and did not show. I did hear from a male participant of the Research Group on the night of the last scheduled session that he would not be able to attend due to his work schedule. I was surprised when one of the participants in the group reported no experiences of violence. This person was also the oldest Research Group member.

Nineteen out of 25 Control Group members surveyed reported at least two or

more types of violence on their pre-test surveys (63.6%). Four out of the six Research Group participants who completed the post-workshop survey reported at least two or more types of violence (66.7%). This outcome shows that violence is widespread among St. Paul parishioners. To determine whether experiences of violence are as far reaching within other congregations, further investigation will need to be performed.

Workshop attendance varied. All eleven Research Group participants attended Workshop #1 (100%); eight attended Workshops #2 and #3 (72.73%); five attended Workshop #4 (45.45%); and seven attended Workshop #5, one of whom attended the first workshop but no others, stayed for less than five minutes, and did not really participate; therefore, the true number of participants at Workshop #5 was 6 (54.54%) (see Chart 13). (The group was puzzled by the attendance of the 7th participant as evidenced by their facial expressions when the participant came near the workshop's end, signed his name on the attendance sheet, stayed for a few minutes, and left.)



Some of the six Research Group participants who completed both pre-test and post-test surveys reported their experiences of violence slightly differently. For example, one of the members reported only having experienced indirect violence on the pre-workshop survey; but reported experiences of both direct and indirect violence on the post-workshop survey. Another participant reported experiences of direct violence and direct threats on the pre-workshop survey; but reported experiences of direct and indirect violence along with direct and indirect threats on the post-workshop survey. Another volunteer reported direct, domestic, child abuse, and indirect threats on the pre-workshop survey and omitted the reporting of child abuse on the post-workshop survey. One person reported direct, indirect, and domestic violence along with direct threats on the pre-workshop survey; but added gun violence and indirect threats to the post-workshop report. This variable in reporting could have been affected by the learning and practical application of storytelling in which participants engaged during the project. These variations could also possibly be attributed to Assman's concept of *mnemohistory*.<sup>83</sup> Further, Cox's assertions that persons do not always have access to their stories and that persons select the stories they tell might also provide an explanation for these variables.<sup>84</sup>

As I suspected, Research Group participants seemed reluctant to talk about their experiences of violence within the group setting though they spoke freely in their individual interviews. Common themes identified included domestic violence with siblings as perpetrators; domestic violence between parents and/or spouses; domestic

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<sup>83</sup> Assman, 8-22.

<sup>84</sup> Cox, 109-120.

violence between relatives; racial violence; child abuse; verbal abuse; and workplace violence. When I shared these common themes with the group during Workshop #4, only two group members owned their themes and shared details of their experiences. Others shared minimally and with reservation. That participants shared sparingly could have been related to the trust factors I mentioned previously. This component might also have been related to attendees' own personalities, the level of privacy they wanted to maintain, what was going on in their lives on the day of the workshop, and/or their level of comfort with the group. One of the persons who shared a story freely stated the project gave her an opportunity to talk about the violence she experienced in life. The volunteer reported she had never discussed being a victim of violence with anyone outside of her family of origin. The participant shared that for her, just to be heard was healing and therapeutic. Two participants shared that their creativity in writing had been pent up but was released after they shared their stories during the individual interviews.

During the last session, a brainstorming opportunity was offered which was to begin with ways the church could have helped participants while they experienced violence. The following longings were shared: (1) That participants would have had an opportunity to share their stories with the church: (2) That someone from the church would have come by and spent time with them and their families; and (3) That the church would have reached out to them just to say they were loved. I had planned for the discussion to move from that point to address how the church might also help those outside its walls who were violence victims. However, participants didn't voice as many ideas as I anticipated. Rather, a large amount of time was spent talking about the culture of secrecy within black families and communities and how those variables would

possibly hinder persons' participation in sessions like these. Attendees lamented the erosion of the love, sharing, and village mentality of the black community of eras past and tied its corrosion largely to the impact of civil rights and integration. This phenomenon reflected Meyers' views that what persons are currently experiencing in their lives at the time their stories are told affects what they tell and with whom they share.<sup>85</sup> Attendees' lament of what the black community once was also points to Gutierrez's assertion that salvation affects one not only politically, but also socially and economically.<sup>86</sup>

Attendees concurred with one group member's statement that God alone is the answer to the prevalence of violence in the black community. The conversation that ensued pointed to the theological concepts of soteriology and church missiology. Participants seem to take the stance that the church needs to go out of its way to create an atmosphere like they experienced during these workshops and offer persons an outlet for sharing. Participants further alluded that to do so could possibly help someone find a relationship with God through Christ. This aspect of the projects pointed to Hiltner's household of faith concept mentioned in the chapter on Theological Reflection.<sup>87</sup>

I shared with the Research Group Smith's findings on how African Americans can draw upon the resources of its community as a means of coping with life's challenges.<sup>88</sup> A few members of the group expressed that their families had been strong,

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<sup>85</sup> Meyers, 10-12.

<sup>86</sup> Gutierrez, 91.

<sup>87</sup> Hiltner, 108-119.

support systems for them as they encountered various struggles. One person shared the story of how one of her neighbors would open her doors to her and one of her siblings when their father put them out of their house in the middle of the night on several occasions. Others shared how their communities, i.e. the black community and the larger Christian community, had encouraged them and shared with them and their families when they were in need.

A catharsis happened in the last workshop session when I pointed out to the group that persons seemed to be avoiding talking about their stories of violence. I had observed that during workshops 3 through 5, when I began to steer the group to a deeper level of discussion, participants often changed the subject and started talking about something else. When I made this observation aloud to the group at the last session, an invisible barrier seemed to be demolished and participants started sharing more openly and freely. Participants shed tears as they talked about the codes of silence within their respective families and how they weren't allowed to talk about what happened to them outside the boundaries of their homes. Discussion also included addressing what seems to be a culture of silence in the black community. Some shared how hurt they were when they weren't allowed to tell their stories or when they shared what happened and no one listened. Such statements pointed to the muteness and invisibility Ellison references in his work.<sup>89</sup> Participants shared painful memories of verbal abuse and the scars they suffered as a result. Overall, participants shared how blessed they felt and how healing it

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<sup>88</sup> Smith, 21-38.

<sup>89</sup> Ellison, 269.

was for them to have a place in which to share their experiences with others who listened and understood. This element of the project points to the sacramental quality of storytelling espoused by Eberhardt.<sup>90</sup> Participants expressed they felt more connected with each other after having heard each other's stories. This affirms what Migliore expounds in his concept of maturing in solidarity and how stories relate us to each other.<sup>91</sup> Members agreed they would like to have the opportunity to continue to share in this way in the future. One participant said this is what the church is supposed to be about—not so much about people just coming inside the four walls and then going out again. Other group members concurred and added the workshops were getting them past their superficial, interpersonal encounters so they could deal with the reality of each other's lives. This session lasted well beyond its scheduled time and the group expressed it would like to have more honest and open dialogues like what transpired. Research Group participants' interchange supported my thesis that storytelling would provide healing for St. Paul parishioners who had experienced violence. However, the wellbeing sections of the pre-test and post-workshop surveys did not demonstrate this result.

When comparing the overall wellbeing sections of the pre-test and post-workshop surveys of Research Participants with whom individual interviews were conducted, I noted that only one participant reported an improvement in her wellbeing after participating in the study. This individual's pre-test survey indicated a wellbeing assessment of Very Good while the corresponding post-workshop assessment stated an

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<sup>90</sup> Eberhardt, 23-31.

<sup>91</sup> Migliore, 4917.

Excellent rating. Two participants denoted their wellbeing stayed the same (Very Good and Fair, respectively). One participant reported a decline in wellbeing (from Excellent on the pre-test to Good on the post-workshop survey). Finally, one of the participants could not be assessed as he/she did not check any of the wellbeing boxes on the pre-test though the Fair entry was marked on the post-workshop survey. Therefore, the written results did not match what participants reported orally.

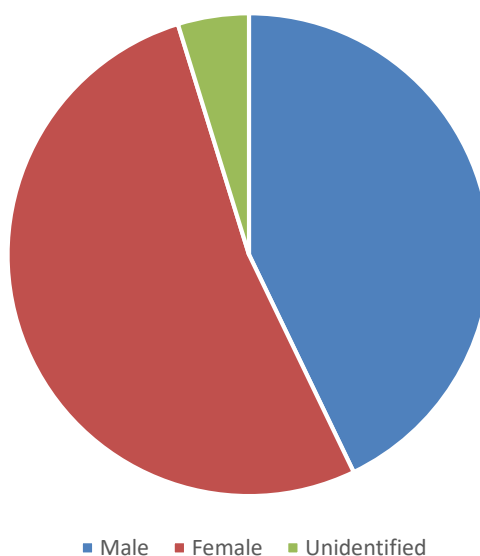
While juxtaposing surveys of the Control Group and the Research Group, I drew the conclusion that four of the Control Group and Research Group participants completed the Experiences of Violence Survey for the Control Group and the Experiences of Violence Survey/Pre-Test for the Research Group. This discovery was evidenced by the birthdates and gender each recorded on their surveys. The handwriting on the above-referenced surveys also bore a strong resemblance to each other. Though I cannot be certain this occurred since no names were recorded on the Control Group surveys, if such is the case, then this phenomenon diminishes the Control Group sample and slightly changes its findings. The suspected duplicate surveys within the Control Group represented three females and one male ranging in age from 39 to 55 years old. The suspected duplicate surveys denoted the following experiences of violence: 3 Direct Violence (14.29%); 2 Indirect Violence (9.5%); 1 Domestic Violence (4.76%); 2 Child Abuse (9.5%); 1 Gun Violence (4.76%); 1 Direct Threat (4.76%); and 1 Indirect Threat (4.76%). None of the suspected duplicate surveys reported experiences of prison or gang violence. The possibility of duplicate surveys slightly skews the results of the survey. If, in fact, duplicate surveys were completed, this means that the Control Group consisted of 21 persons. For sake of clarity, I hereinafter refer to this group as the Modified Control



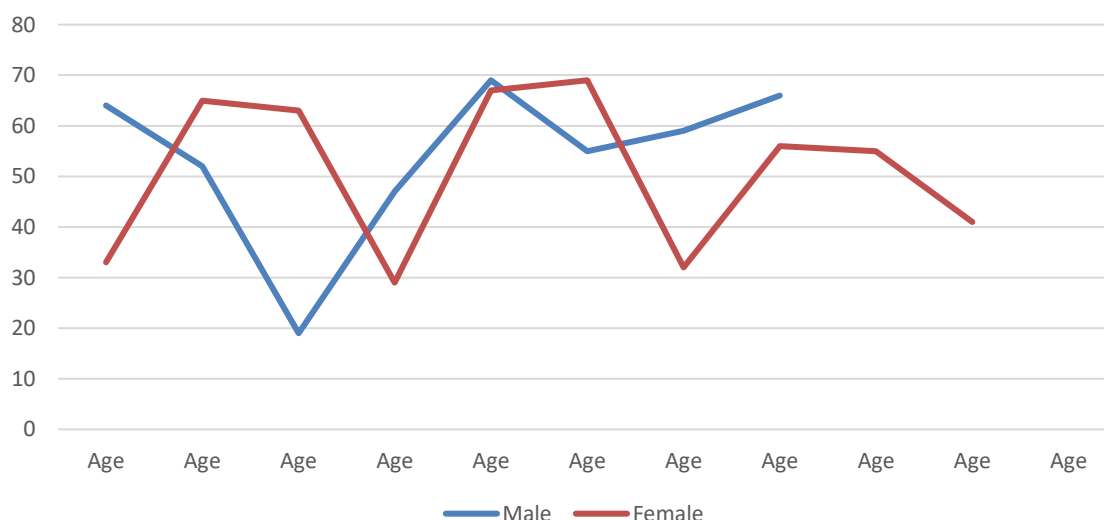
Group. Said grouping contained 9 males, 11 females and one person of unknown gender (see Chart 14). Members ranged in age from 19 to 69 years old (see Chart 15).

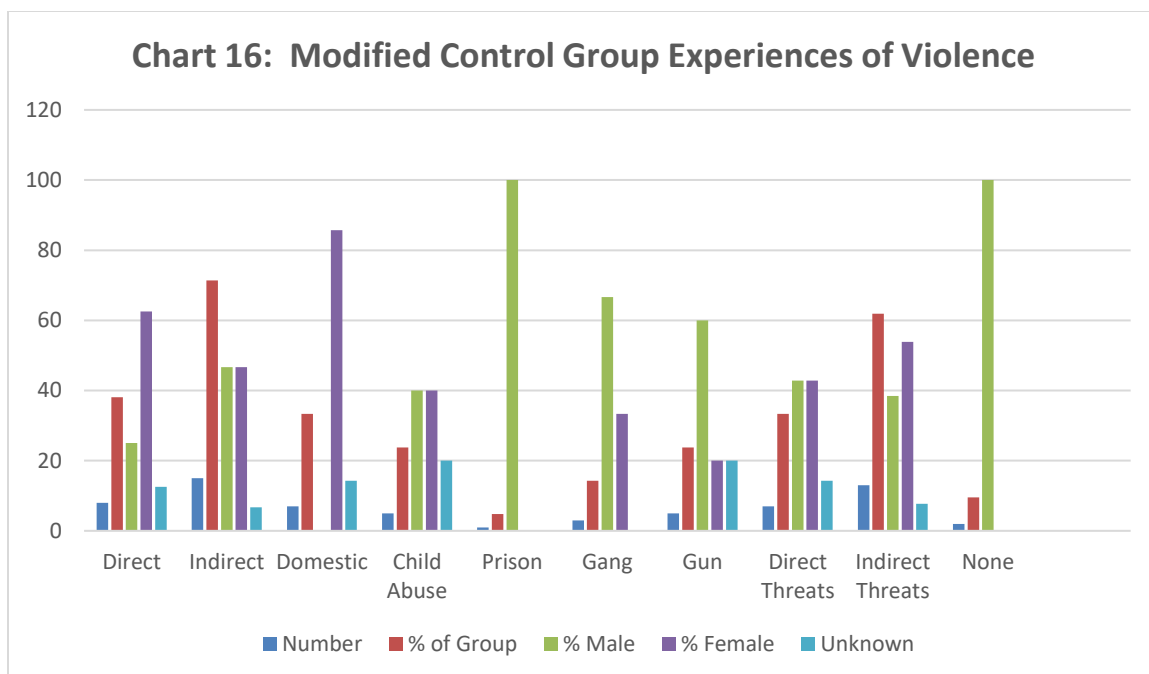
Experiences of Violence reported by the Modified Control Group varied slightly from the Control Group and are displayed in Chart 16.

**Chart 14: Gender Composition of Modified Control Group**

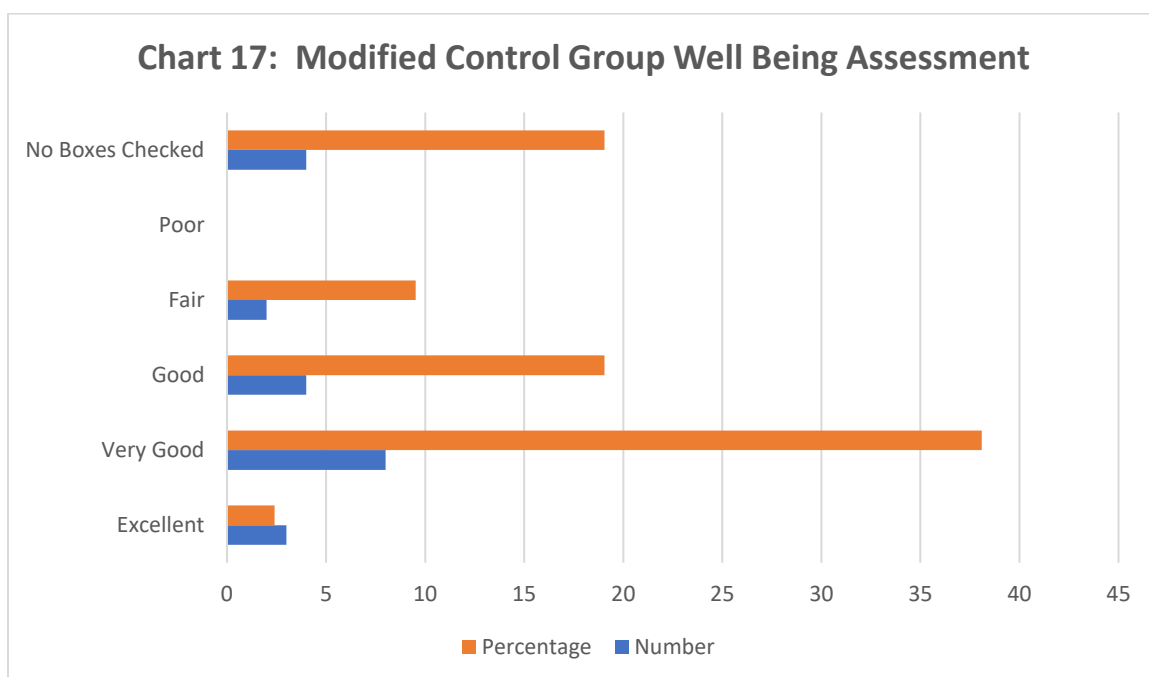


**Chart 15: Gender and Age Composition  
Modified Control Group**





The Modified Control Group also reports its assessment of wellbeing slightly differently than the Control Group (see Chart 17).



Following completion of the project, I realized that I conducted no measurement of how participation in the study impacted Research Group participants. Therefore, the Post-Project Survey was developed and sent to participants for completion approximately four months following the project's completion (see Appendix 9). The survey was distributed to all Research Group participants who were asked to rate the impact of each Workshop segment in which they participated. Five of the Research Group participants completed the Post-Project Survey. Eighty percent (80%) of participants reported the workshops in which they participated were very impactful and twenty percent (20%) reported the workshops were somewhat impactful. All participants reported participation in each of the workshops was a positive experience with one exception. One participant reported participation in Workshop #3 had a negative impact upon him because he left feeling helpless regarding his ability to reduce the violence in the society in which we live. That same participant, however, reported that the experience of participating in Workshop #3 was somewhat impactful although in a negative way. In hindsight, I would rather have created an evaluation instrument that would have been used at the close of each workshop segment rather than sending another survey four months later. This would have given me immediate feedback on the impact of the workshop on participants and provided them a means of reporting their experiences while their memories were fresh rather than approximately 120 days later when their memories may have been fading.

*Assessment of Personal Growth and Development.* While conducting this study, I was aware of my own parallel process. Each evening I was fatigued near the end of the session because prior to meeting with the group I had already endured a 12-hour day at

minimum. The drive from the hospital where I work as a Chaplain to St. Paul averaged 1.5 to 2 hours in heavy traffic which also contributed to my tiredness. Nevertheless, Research Group Participants gave me high ratings as a workshop facilitator and interviewee as evidenced by the surveys they completed at the end of the workshop and/or interview sessions. A majority of workshop participants reported that I was prepared to facilitate sessions, that I was knowledgeable of the subject matter presented, that their questions were answered sufficiently, and that I clearly communicated the workshop and project information to them. Additionally, participants reported that each workshop started and ended on time with exception of the last workshop which lasted well beyond the time allocated due to the above-referenced verbose conversations that erupted. Feedback from the workshop participants affirmed my efficacy as a facilitator and as a growing expert in the material that I researched and presented to them. These affirmations grew me professionally and spiritually as they affirmed not only the broad knowledge I received by engaging in this research, but also my calling as a pastoral caregiver equipped by God to serve God's people.

The biggest regret I have in facilitating this project is that I did not dedicate an entire session or portion thereof to share with the group the grief I was experiencing at leaving the St. Paul congregation. While I was keenly aware of the period of bereavement I was experiencing in response to my abrupt departure from St. Paul a week following our Annual Conference, I stuck to the task at hand rather than engaging the group in a process that could possibly have fostered healing for them and me. I sensed that St. Paul parishioners were also experiencing the pain of my loss as their shepherd and a member of their community. However, I did not formally attend to this looming

cloud that cast a shadow over my head and possibly theirs. Cooper-White encourages pastoral caregivers to assess how their unresolved personal issues may be impacting their care to others.<sup>92</sup> In her presentation of the case study of Linda, Cooper-White demonstrates how one's own "stuff" might interfere with the care one provides. While facilitating these workshops, I was engaged with participants but also intentionally guarded with my emotions. I struggled to balance my engagement with parishioners with my process of grief and my felt need to protect myself from further attachment to St. Paul members. My own sub-stories played in the background while I simultaneously served as a story companion to group members.<sup>93</sup> I finished the sessions sufficiently but left each one feeling physically and emotionally exhausted. Throughout the project, I recognized my need for self-care and attended to same by seeking the help of professional colleagues. In retrospect, I regret the decision to forge ahead and not take time out to process my own grief and the grief participants might have also been experiencing. Storytelling around this issue could have provided healing and a means of closure for the volunteers and me while also giving voice to an elephant in the room that unfortunately went unacknowledged.

When designing this project, I planned to present findings of the study to the St. Paul congregation following its completion. This did not happen because of the change in pastoral assignments that occurred very close to the study's inception. Because I now serve as pastor in a different location that meets at the same time each Sunday as St. Paul,

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<sup>92</sup> Pamela Cooper-White. *Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2004). Kindle Edition, 992-1001.

<sup>93</sup> Scheib, 61-77.

making this presentation personally proves difficult. Therefore, I will provide St. Paul with a copy of the project for its perusal upon completion. My hope is that in the future, I will also be able to return to the St. Paul to thank the congregation personally for their assistance with this effort and engage in a dialogue with them about how this project might have shaped them theologically and personally.

Through engagement in this research, I have learned that the process of effecting change in a congregation or community requires a strong work ethic, tediousness to the task at hand, commitment, dedication, and attention to the pastoral care needs of persons involved and not just the particularities and outcomes of the research. I have grown in my ability to suspend tasks for the sake of taking care of the people that God has placed in my care. With fortitude, I have braved new storms that have come my way and persevered. If I could go back and do some things differently, I would, i.e. working through the pain of my loss pertaining to leaving the St. Paul congregation and inviting attendees to journey together in group process surrounding that issue. However, what I have learned along the way has made me a better Pastor, Chaplain, pastoral caregiver, and researcher going forward.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This project can be considered successful in terms of the means of evaluation I used. As proposed, I engaged St. Paul parishioners who were violence victims in a process of learning about and engaging in storytelling. I collected and recorded the stories of five Research Group participants in individual sessions. The level of participation in individual interviews represented 83.3% of the persons who signed up for them (5 out of 6). Workshop attendance dwindled as the workshops progressed. While 100% of the group attended the first segment, participation dwindled to 45.4% at Workshop #4 where common themes among individual stories were discussed with the group at large. Two participants were prohibited from attending segment 4 due to a prior obligation and the death of a family member, respectively. Portions of the stories individuals shared in their interviews were discussed with the larger group. Six Research Group participants (54.5%) attended the final session and completed the Post-Workshop Survey I administered. The group brainstormed ideas regarding what the church could have done to minister to them when they experienced violence. However, the group spent more time talking about codes of secrecy within their family systems and the black community than it did coming up with ways the church could reach violence victims. The group's sharing of common threads in their stories seemed to promote healing and cohesion within the group. Though limited, group participants' sharing of ideas of how the church can help pointed to God's salvific work and the church's missiology.

Though only one person in the Research Group reported an improvement in her sense of wellbeing as a result participating in the project, participants verbally expressed

that they found the workshops helpful. Participants stated in writing that they would recommend the series of workshops to others. Findings of the study sustain that experiences of violence are prevalent within the St. Paul congregation. Project results suggest that storytelling helps to facilitate healing in violence victims. The Post-Project Survey administered four months after the project's inception showed the workshops were either somewhat impactful (20%) or very impactful upon participants (80%). Overall comments pointed to how participation in the workshops helped subjects to express themselves better and/or be more willing to do so; how the workshops helped them to come to a better understanding of how they became the persons that they are; how the workshops raised their levels of consciousness and helped them be more aware of their surroundings; how workshop participation gave them a better understanding of the importance of storytelling in order to be relatable to the congregation and in everyday business to make one's point for others to see; and how storytelling created excitement about learning more about their family histories. Though the outcome of this project proved beneficial, further study will need to be conducted on a wider scale to determine how effective storytelling is with victims of violence. In the meantime, the findings of this report might prove helpful to churches who seek to use storytelling to minister healing to victims of violence in their congregations and communities.



## APPENDIX A

### CONTROL GROUP SURVEY

Gender: \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female Ethnic Group/Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_ Faith Tradition: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (format: xx/xx/xxxx)

### EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

The term *violence* refers to the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”<sup>94</sup>

#### Check all that apply:

- ☐ Direct violence – violence against me personally
- ☐ Indirect violence – violence against someone else that affected me
- ☐ Domestic violence – violence in the home whether perpetrated by me or someone else
- ☐ Child Abuse – violence against me when I was a minor or that I inflicted against a minor
- ☐ Prison violence – violence perpetrated against me or that I perpetrated against someone else while incarcerated
- ☐ Gang violence – violence perpetrated against me or someone else as a result of gang involvement
- ☐ Gun violence – violence perpetrated against me or someone else that involved the use of firearms
- ☐ Direct Threats – threats of violence against me personally or that I directed against someone else
- ☐ Indirect threats – threats of violence that I witnessed against another person

Describe the effects of any and/or all of the above-referenced experiences of violence upon your life:

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Rate your overall sense of wellbeing as it pertains to the violence you have experienced during your life. (check one only) ☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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<sup>94</sup> Rutherford, Alison, Anthony B. Zwi, Natalie B. Grove, and Alexander Butchart. “Violence: A Glossary.” *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 2007 August 61(8), 676-680 quoted from Krug E, Dahlberg L, Mercy J. et al., *World report on violence and health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002. (Accessed October 5, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2652990>.)

## APPENDIX B

### RESEARCH GROUP PRE-INTERVIEW SURVEY (PRE-TEST)

Gender: \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female Ethnic Group/Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_ Faith Tradition: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (format: xx/xx/xxxx)

#### EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

The term *violence* refers to the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”<sup>95</sup>

##### Check all that apply:

- ☐ Direct violence – violence against me personally
- ☐ Indirect violence – violence against someone else that affected me
- ☐ Domestic violence – violence in the home whether perpetrated by me or someone else
- ☐ Child Abuse – violence against me when I was a minor or that I inflicted against a minor
- ☐ Prison violence – violence perpetrated against me or that I perpetrated against someone else while incarcerated
- ☐ Gang violence – violence perpetrated against me or someone else as a result of gang involvement
- ☐ Gun violence – violence perpetrated against me or someone else that involved the use of firearms
- ☐ Direct Threats – threats of violence against me personally or that I directed against someone else
- ☐ Indirect threats – threats of violence that I witnessed against another person

Describe the effects of any and/or all of the above-referenced experiences of violence upon your life:

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Rate your overall sense of wellbeing as it pertains to the violence you have experienced during your life. (check one only) ☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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<sup>95</sup> Rutherford, Alison, Anthony B. Zwi, Natalie B. Grove, and Alexander Butchart. “Violence: A Glossary.” *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 2007 August 61(8), 676-680 quoted from Krug E, Dahlberg L, Mercy J. et al., *World report on violence and health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002. (Accessed October 5, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2652990>.)

## APPENDIX C

### RESEARCH GROUP POST-INTERVIEW SURVEY

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_ Female      **Ethnic Group/Race:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Nationality:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Faith Tradition:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ (format: xx/xx/xxxx)

#### EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

The term *violence* refers to the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”<sup>96</sup>

#### Check all that apply:

- ☐ Direct violence – violence against me personally
- ☐ Indirect violence – violence against someone else that affected me
- ☐ Domestic violence – violence in the home whether perpetrated by me or someone else
- ☐ Child Abuse – violence against me when I was a minor or that I inflicted against a minor
- ☐ Prison violence – violence perpetrated against me or that I perpetrated against someone else while incarcerated
- ☐ Gang violence – violence perpetrated against me or someone else as a result of gang involvement
- ☐ Gun violence – violence perpetrated against me or someone else that involved the use of firearms
- ☐ Direct Threats – threats of violence against me personally or that I directed against someone else
- ☐ Indirect threats – threats of violence that I witnessed against another person

Describe any effects (negative or positive) participation in this project has had on you in terms of dealing with the above-referenced experiences of violence in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate your overall sense of wellbeing as it pertains to the violence you have experienced during your life. (check one only) ☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Would you recommend participation in this project to others? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Describe how churches in the community can help you heal from any negative effects of the violence you have experienced in your life. \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>96</sup> Rutherford, Alison, Anthony B. Zwi, Natalie B. Grove, and Alexander Butchart. “Violence: A Glossary.” *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 2007 August 61(8), 676-680 quoted from Krug E, Dahlberg L, Mercy J. et al., *World report on violence and health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002. (Accessed October 5, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2652990>.)

## APPENDIX D

### WORKSHOP #1 – INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT AND STORYTELLING

Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC

July 13, 2017

### EVALUATION FORM

*Please check one (1) response to each statement below. 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree; N/A-Not Applicable.*

1. The lighting, temperature, and setting were comfortable.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
2. The researcher exhibited knowledge of the subject matter.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
3. The researcher was prepared to facilitate the session.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
4. The workshop started on time and ended on time.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
5. Questions I raised were answered sufficiently.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
6. The workshop provided comfort for me in asking questions/making comments:  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
7. The workshop inspired my interest in continued participation in the project.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
8. The researcher clearly communicated workshop/project information.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
9. I would like to further discuss experiences I recalled during this workshop.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
10. I would recommend participation in this workshop to others.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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APPENDIX E

**WORKSHOP #2 – BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF  
STORYTELLING**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

**July 20, 2017**

**EVALUATION FORM**

*Please check one (1) response to each statement below. 1=Strongly Disagree;  
2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree; N/A-Not  
Applicable.*

1. The lighting, temperature, and setting were comfortable.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
2. The researcher exhibited knowledge of the subject matter.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
3. The researcher was prepared to facilitate the session.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
4. The workshop started on time and ended on time.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
5. Questions I raised were answered sufficiently.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
6. The workshop provided comfort for me in asking questions/making comments:  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
7. The workshop inspired my interest in continued participation in the project.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
8. The researcher clearly communicated workshop/project information.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
9. I would like to further discuss experiences I recalled during this workshop.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
10. I would recommend participation in this workshop to others.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX F

**WORKSHOP #3 – EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE IN OUR WORLD**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student**

**Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

**July 20, 2017**

**EVALUATION FORM**

*Please check one (1) response to each statement below. 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree; N/A-Not Applicable.*

1. The lighting, temperature, and setting were comfortable.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
2. The researcher exhibited knowledge of the subject matter.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
3. The researcher was prepared to facilitate the session.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
4. The workshop started on time and ended on time.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
5. Questions I raised were answered sufficiently.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
6. The workshop provided comfort for me in asking questions/making comments:  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
7. The workshop inspired my interest in continued participation in the project.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
8. The researcher clearly communicated workshop/project information.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
9. I would like to further discuss experiences I recalled during this workshop.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
10. I would recommend participation in this workshop to others.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

### WORKSHOP #4 - GROUP PROCESS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF STORYTELLING

Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC

August 10, 2017

### EVALUATION FORM

*Please check one (1) response to each statement below. 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree; N/A-Not Applicable.*

1. The lighting, temperature, and setting were comfortable.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
2. The researcher exhibited knowledge of the subject matter.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
3. The researcher was prepared to facilitate the session.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
4. The workshop started on time and ended on time.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
5. Questions I raised were answered sufficiently.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
6. The workshop provided comfort for me in asking questions/making comments:  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
7. The workshop inspired my interest in continued participation in the project.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
8. The researcher clearly communicated workshop/project information.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
9. I would like to further discuss experiences I recalled during this workshop.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
10. I would recommend participation in this workshop to others.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX H

### WORKSHOP #5 – COLLABORATIVE BRAINSTORMING AND PLANNING

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

**August 17, 2017**

### EVALUATION FORM

*Please check one (1) response to each statement below. 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree; N/A-Not Applicable.*

1. The lighting, temperature, and setting were comfortable.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
2. The researcher exhibited knowledge of the subject matter.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
3. The researcher was prepared to facilitate the session.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
4. The workshop started on time and ended on time.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
5. Questions I raised were answered sufficiently.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
6. The workshop provided comfort for me in asking questions/making comments:  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
7. The workshop inspired my interest in continued participation in the project.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
8. The researcher clearly communicated workshop/project information.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
9. I would like to further discuss experiences I recalled during this workshop.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐
10. I would recommend participation in this workshop to others.  
1      2      3      4      5      N/A  
☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐    ☐

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX I

### **Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

#### **RESEARCH GROUP POST-PROJECT SURVEY December 2017**

Choose one selection to rate the degree to which participation in the workshops associated with this project impacted you using the following scale: **1 = Very Unimpactful; 2 = Somewhat Unimpactful; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Somewhat Impactful; 5 = Very Impactful; N/A - Not Applicable.**

1. Participation in ***Workshop #1: Introduction to Project and Storytelling*** had the following impact upon me:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>NA</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above-described impact of Workshop #1 was: ☐ Positive ☐ Negative

Name some ways your life was impacted by Workshop #1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Participation in ***Workshop #2: Biblical and Theological Implications of Storytelling*** had the following impact upon me:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>NA</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above-described impact of Workshop #2 was: ☐ Positive ☐ Negative

Name some ways your life was impacted by Workshop #2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Participation in ***Workshop #3: Experiences of Violence in Our World*** had the following impact upon me:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>NA</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above-described impact of Workshop #3 was: ☐ Positive ☐ Negative

Name some ways your life was impacted by Workshop #3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Post-Project Survey (continued)

4. Participation in **Workshop #4: Group Process and Storytelling** had the following impact upon me:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>NA</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above-described impact of Workshop #4 was: ☐ Positive ☐ Negative

Name some ways your life was impacted by Workshop #4: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Participation in **Workshop #5: Collaborative Brainstorming and Planning** had the following impact upon me:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>NA</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above-described impact of Workshop #4 was: ☐ Positive ☐ Negative

Name some ways your life was impacted by Workshop #5: \_\_\_\_\_

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General Comments regarding impact of the Project on you personally: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thanks so much for your participation.

With gratitude,

Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Researcher

## APPENDIX J

### WORSHIP BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

**Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs**, candidate for the Doctor of Ministry degree in Pastoral Care and Counseling at Gardner-Webb University, is asking adult members of the **St. Paul congregation to participate in her research project** entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*. **The project aims to teach, model, and test the power of storytelling with adults who have experienced violence either directly and/or indirectly. The project requires the following to take place between July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>:**

- **A survey** to be completed by adult members of the congregation (this will take about 5 minutes and will be done on a Sunday morning either during or immediately following worship);
- **That 8 to 10 adult parishioners engage in a series of five one-hour workshops that will take place at St. Paul** on Thursday evenings, Saturday morning/afternoons, and/or at such other times that are mutually convenient for participants (date/time for subsequent sessions will be established at the first workshop); and
- **That of the aforementioned group of 8 to 10 adults, the researcher (Pastor Dobbs) will interview and record the stories of a minimum of 5 persons** to identify any common themes that might exist.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants will be maintained. **For more information, contact Pastor Dobbs at [revlemora@msn.com](mailto:revlemora@msn.com) or via phone/text to 770.639.7896.** Thanks in advance for your participation and support.

## APPENDIX K

### **TEXT MESSAGE INVITATION**

(send on Monday, June 26, 2017 @ 8:35am)

Good morning St. Paul! I hope this text finds you well. I need your help so I can finish my doctoral degree. I'm [in] need of 5-10 adult members of St. Paul to participate in a series of 5 one-hour workshops between July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>. The workshops concern storytelling as a means of ministering healing to those who have experienced violence directly or indirectly. An example of indirect violence might be news and/or the experience of a violent act to someone you know or don't know that affects you in some way or no way. There was an announcement in the worship bulletin on yesterday. This has been cleared with Pastor Johnson. Can I count on you to help me? Thanks so much. Pastor Dobbs.

## APPENDIX L

### **PASTOR'S APPEAL FOR PROJECT PARTICIPATION**

(July 9, 2017)

Rev. Lemora Dobbs has asked the St. Paul congregation to assist her by participating in the research project for her Doctor of Ministry degree. Participation is voluntary; however only adults age 18 and older can participate. The survey should take no more than five minutes to complete.

Please answer each question/fill in each blank in full using a black or blue pen.

DO NOT put your name on the survey.

Answer each question as it pertains to you.

If you are participating in the Research Group that will meet this Thursday at 7:30pm, DO NOT complete this survey. You will complete a survey designed for your group at the meeting.

At the designated time, please turn your survey face down and pass it to the center aisle for collection.

Thanks so much!

APPENDIX M

**GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT  
RESEARCH GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

***Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult  
Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who  
Have Experienced Violence***

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

By affixing my signature hereto, I hereby agree to hold in strictest confidence any and all personal information shared by other research group participants, obtained by me from said individuals, and/or otherwise made accessible to me as a result of my participation in this study. I will not discuss any information shared in any of the workshop sessions with any third parties, whether they are within and/or outside this group, unless I have obtained express, written permission from the person(s) to which the information pertains to do so. Further, I will not discuss and/or disclose similar, general, and/or specific parameters regarding other group participants' personal information in conversation, email communications, text messages, social media sites, and/or through any other communicative means unless I have obtained said individual's or individuals' written permission. As a participant in this group, if another research group participant shares any information with me that may pose a threat to him/herself, or any person(s), entity(ies), organization(s), agency(cies) inside or outside this group, I will immediately report same to the above-referenced Researcher for investigation and action in accordance with her moral and ethical responsibilities.

This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_(Signature)  
Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX N

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, CONSENT AND WAIVER

**Acknowledgement.** I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name), attest and acknowledge that I have been advised of the probable consequences, outcomes and/or effects of my participation in this research project entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*. I hereby acknowledge that I have been advised that Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, any and all research assistants, successors, assigns, and/or designees, individually and severally, are required by law to immediately report to the appropriate legal authorities any information shared during the course of my participation in the project that discloses past or present criminal behavior perpetrated by me, others, and/or perpetrated by anyone against me or others. I also acknowledge that any verbiage, action or behavior that indicates I might pose a threat to myself or others will be taken seriously by any and all researchers, successors, assigns, and/or designees, individually and severally, and such verbiage, action or behavior will be reported immediately to appropriate legal authorities.

**Consent.** I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), hereby consent to participation in the Doctor of Ministry research project conducted by Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Student at Gardner-Webb University entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*. I give permission for information shared by me in workshops and sessions pertaining to the study to be used by the researcher and included in any printed and/or published materials associated with said research project. I understand that information shared during the course of this project that is printed will be read by persons that are directly, indirectly, or not at all associated with this study. I further consent that personal information shared in sessions or workshops pertaining to this study may be used anonymously for research purposes. By affixing my signature hereto, I attest that any information shared in any workshops or sessions of this project in which I participate may be used anonymously in subsequent publications, workshops, seminars, and/or shared in person and/or electronically with the public at large. I give consent that information shared in all sessions and/or workshops pertaining to this study may be used in reporting the research findings and further understand that my real name will be disguised whenever the information shared in these interviews is shared with others in any of the aforementioned methods.

**Waiver.** As a participant in the research project entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*, I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), hereby agree to hold release and hold harmless Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, St. Paul AME Church-Canton,

Inc., The African Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc., Gardner-Webb University, and any and all of their successors, assigns, designees, and/or any other persons associated with any of said entities whether named, unnamed, and/or implied directly and/or indirectly through this research project harmless from any damages and/or injuries physical or otherwise that may arise from my participation in this research project. I understand that in the future information shared by me in any of the sessions and/or workshops included in or pertaining to this study may appear anonymously in published and/or printed materials and may also be shared anonymously with church congregations and/or the public at large either verbally or in written form. I hereby waive my right to pursue any of the aforementioned parties and any of their successors, assigns, designees, and/or any other persons associated with any of said entities whether named, unnamed, and/or implied directly and/or indirectly, through any legal course of action that may arise by my participation in this research project.

This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

**Witness:**

**Research Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX O

### **WORKSHOP #1 – INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT AND STORYTELLING**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC  
July 13, 2017**

#### **Project Title:**

*Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult  
Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton,  
Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*

**Welcome/Greeting/Acknowledgements**

**Opening Prayer/Blessing of the Food/Dinner is Served**

**Statement of Voluntary Nature of Project**

**Administer Research Group Pre-Interview Survey**

#### ***Project Overview***

This project will teach, model, and test the healing power of storytelling as a pastoral care intervention with persons who have been violence victims. The project will also lay the groundwork for future work that explores the use storytelling and its effectiveness in ministering healing to various segments of the general population. The project will consist of five (5) forty-five minute to one-hour workshops:

**Workshop #1 – Introduction to Project and Storytelling.**

**Workshop #2 – Biblical and Theological Implications of Storytelling**

**Workshop #3 – Stories of Violence in our World (Video and/or film clip)**

**Workshop #4 – Group Process and the Experience of Storytelling**

**Sharing identified common themes and portions of personal stories**

**(per participants' discretion)**

**Workshop #5 – Collaborative Brainstorming and Planning**

Between Workshops #3 and #4, Researcher will conduct individual, personal interviews with Research Group participants. After conducting said individual sessions, Researcher will identify common themes that will be discussed and explored in Workshop #4.

Research Group participants will decide at their own discretion how much or how little personal information they would like to share with others in the group. Research Group participation will conclude with a brainstorming session in which ideas are shared on how the church might be helpful to persons in the church and/or community who have experienced violence.

**Question and Answer Session**

**Schedule Remaining Workshops**

**Administer Group Confidentiality Consent**

**Reading of Debriefing Statement**

**Administer Workshop Evaluation**

**Closing Prayer**

## APPENDIX P

### **WORKSHOP #2 – BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF STORYTELLING**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC  
July 20, 2017**

#### **Project Title:**

***Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult  
Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who  
Have Experienced Violence***

#### **Welcome/Opening Prayer/Blessing of the Food**

#### **Beginning Statement regarding Voluntary Nature of Participation in the Research Project**

#### **Storytelling Warm Up**

Quotation: “We all have stories. We just lack listeners.” (Jackie Sullivan as quoted in John C. Karl, “Caring for the Stories that Come to Us: Work Narratives and Their Sacred Promise.” *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Volume 56, Number 1, Spring 2002, 29-40.)

#### **Brainstorming**

#### **Biblical and Theological Implications of Two Bible Stories (small group exercise)**

**Group #1: The Passover (Exodus 12:1-42, emphasis vv. 24-28)**

**Group #2: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)**

- Story aspects
- Immersing ourselves in the text
- Intersections (in what way(s) does the story speak to you and your life?)
- In what ways does immersing yourself in the text and/or examining intersections between your story and the biblical story shape your view of yourself, others, and God/
- Reauthoring/reframing the story (if you could change something about this story, what would that be?)

Dr. Edward P. Wimberly posits that one of the most significant ways of doing pastoral counseling is to provide persons with a forum for exploring their stories within a biblical framework in which re-authoring or reframing can take place. (“Pastoral Counseling with African American Males,” *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, Volume 21, Numbers 1-2, Fall-Spring 1993-1994, 127-144.)

#### **Closing Comments**

**Debriefing Statement**

**Workshop #2 Evaluation & Closing Prayer**

## APPENDIX Q

### **WORKSHOP #3 – EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE IN OUR WORLD**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student**

**Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

**July 20, 2017**

#### **Project Title:**

*Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*

#### **Welcome & Opening Prayer**

#### **Statement of Voluntary Nature of Participation in the Research Project**

#### **Word Association Warm Up**

#### **Experience of Violence Videos (view at least three):**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKezTT7qvwY>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia0w\\_dOj7R4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia0w_dOj7R4)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpGxagKOkv8>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxBeCSaBtXc>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93XhgC\\_1zes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93XhgC_1zes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hM6MNRPVMCo>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdgkARxgxA>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgK8e0BOnzg>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cz0hOMODvk>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqwkdDaz-jk>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pL3kz5g2Mkw>

#### **Small Group Discussion**

#### **Sharing with Large Group**

#### **Debriefing Statement**

#### **Workshop Evaluations**

#### **Prayer Requests and Closing Prayer**

## APPENDIX R

### **WORKSHOP #4 – GROUP PROCESS AND STORYTELLING**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student**

**Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

**August 10, 2017**

#### **Project Title:**

*Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*

#### **Welcome, Opening Prayer & Blessing of the Food**

#### **Statement of Voluntary Nature of Participation in the Research Project**

#### **Consent, Acknowledgement and Waiver**

#### **Brief Review**

#### **Common Themes**

- Domestic Violence
  - Physical abuse
    - Parent against parent
    - Siblings as perpetrators
    - Relatives against other relatives
  - Verbal abuse
    - Parent against parent
    - Spousal
    - Siblings as perpetrators
    - Relatives against other relatives
  - Emotional abuse
    - Parent against parent
    - Spousal
    - Siblings as perpetrators
    - Relatives against other relatives
- Neighborhood Violence
  - Involving relatives
    - Siblings as perpetrators or victims
    - Other relatives as perpetrators or victims
  - Involving unknown persons as perpetrators and/or victims
  - Racial violence
- Workplace Violence
  - Physical
  - Verbal and/or emotional

**Effects**

- Humiliation
- Privacy
- Lack of trust
- Anger
- Self-worth/self esteem
- Depression

**Coping Mechanisms:**

- Internalization
  - Illnesses
  - Mental frame of reference
- Ignoring perpetrators
- Forgiveness
- Humor
- Removing selves from situations

**Wrap-Up****Debriefing Statement****Evaluation****Closing Prayer**

## APPENDIX S

### **WORKSHOP #5 – COLLABORATIVE BRAINSTORMING AND PLANNING**

**Researcher: Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Doctor of Ministry Student**

**Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC**

**August 17, 2017**

#### **Project Title:**

*Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*

#### **Welcome, Opening Prayer & Blessing of the Food**

#### **Statement of Voluntary Nature of Participation in the Research Project**

##### **Group Discussion**

- Benefits/Pitfalls of participation in the Project
- What we learned about ourselves
- What we learned about others
- What we learned about storytelling as healing to persons who have experienced violence

##### **Brainstorming**

- How can the church help those who are violence victims?
  - Inside the church
  - Outside the church
- Envision a model(s) the church can use to minister to persons who have experienced violence. In other words, if you were serving on the committee that was in charge of planning a workshop at the church for the purpose of bringing healing to persons who have experienced violence, what would that workshop look like?
- Open Comments

#### **Expressions of Gratitude**

#### **Debriefing Statement**

#### **Evaluation for Workshop #5**

#### **Post-Test for Research Participants**

#### **Closing Prayer**



## APPENDIX T

### **STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PROJECT PARTICIPATION (Read to Group by Researcher at the Beginning of each Segment of the Study)**

Good afternoon (morning/evening). Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this Research Project entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*. I appreciate your presence. I want to take this opportunity to remind you that participation in this research project is completely voluntary. While your continued involvement with this study is important to its results, your continuation with the project is at your discretion. This means you can choose to continue or withdraw at any time. By remaining here today and participating, you acknowledge that you are doing so out of your own free will and that you are not being coerced. If anyone has any questions concerning the voluntary aspects of participation in this study, I will be glad to entertain them at this time.

[PAUSE FOR QUESTIONS.]

Then let us begin. Our session today concerns \_\_\_\_\_  
(whatever the segment topic is).

## APPENDIX U

### DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

**(Read by Researcher at the End of Each Segment)**

Thank you for completing this segment of the Research Project entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in Canton, Georgia Who Have Experienced Violence*. Sometimes participation in projects such as these can cause emotional distress as a result of remembering painful personal experiences. I want you to know that your emotional health is important. Therefore, I am making myself available to you to provide pastoral care. I will be around for a while following this segment. If you need to reach me later, feel free to do so by reaching out to me via phone or text at 770.639.7896. There is also a resource list of helping professionals in the community that are available to assist you that has been prepared for your use. Again, your emotional health during this project is of utmost importance; so I urge you to take advantage of the help that is offered. Thank you and God bless you.

## APPENDIX V

### COMMUNITY COUNSELING RESOURCES

Lisa Ehlers, M.E.D., LMSW  
Goshen Valley Ministries  
505 Brown Industrial Parkway, Suite 200  
Canton, GA 30114  
770.745.9535 (phone)  
[lehlers@goshenvalley.org](mailto:lehlers@goshenvalley.org)  
Sliding fee scale

Katherine Hammond, LPC  
North Georgia Counseling Group LLC  
2450 Atlanta Highway, Suite 1901  
Cumming, GA 30040  
1.843.696.1614  
[hammond@georgiacounselinggroup.com](mailto:hammond@georgiacounselinggroup.com)  
Sliding fee scale

Family Counseling Associates of North Georgia  
11675 Century Drive, Unit C  
Alpharetta, GA 30009  
(770) 667-0811  
Website: [familycounseling4ng.org](http://familycounseling4ng.org)

Northside Psychological Services  
5755 N Point Pkwy #256  
Alpharetta, GA 30022  
(770) 667-3877  
Website: [npsga.com](http://npsga.com)  
Takes third-party payments

The Summit Counseling Center  
2750 Old Alabama Road, Suite 200  
Alpharetta, GA 30022  
678-893-5300  
Website: [summitcounseling.org](http://summitcounseling.org)  
Sliding fee scale for those who qualify

Christian Counseling Service  
125 Church St NE  
Marietta, GA 30060

(770) 429-9293  
Website: mariettaccs.com  
Uses a sliding fee scale

Turner Chapel AME Counseling Center  
492 N. Marietta Parkway  
Marietta, GA 30060  
770-422-5541  
Website: turnerchapelame.org  
Accepts insurance payments for some services; have a sliding fee scale

Hillside Counseling Center  
(a ministry of Hillside United Methodist Church)  
4474 Towne Lake Parkway  
Woodstock GA 30189  
770-924-8517  
Website: hillsideumc.org  
Sliding fee scale

Amanda Williams, Director of Operations (not a counselor but good at locating resources especially for veterans)  
Extended Family Support  
5077 Dallas Highway, Suite 301  
Powder Springs, GA 30127  
[awilliams@extendedfamilysupport.com](mailto:awilliams@extendedfamilysupport.com)

## APPENDIX W

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*print name*), attest and acknowledge that I have been advised of the probable consequences, outcomes and/or effects of my participation in this research project entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners in a Northwest Georgia Church Who Have Experienced Violence*. I hereby acknowledge that I have been advised that Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, any and all research assistants, successors, assigns, and/or designees, individually and severally, are required by law to immediately report to the appropriate legal authorities any information shared during the course of the interviews associated with this project that discloses past or present criminal behavior perpetrated by me, others, and/or perpetrated by anyone against me or others. I also acknowledge that any verbiage, action or behavior that indicates I might pose a threat to myself or others will be taken seriously by any and all researchers, successors, assigns, and/or designees, individually and severally, and such verbiage, action or behavior will be reported immediately to appropriate legal authorities.

This \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

**Witness:**

**Research Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX X

### CONSENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*print name*), hereby consent to participation in the Doctor of Ministry research project conducted by Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, Student at Gardner-Webb University entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners in a Northwest Georgia Church Who Have Experienced Violence*. I give permission for the interviews associated with this project to be recorded electronically and for the information and contents provided therein to be used by the researcher and included in any printed and/or published materials associated with said research project. I understand that information shared in the interviews associated with this project that is printed will be read by persons that are directly, indirectly, or not at all associated with this research project. I further consent that personal information shared in these interviews may be used anonymously for research purposes. By affixing my signature hereto, I attest that any information shared in the interviews associated with this research project may be used anonymously in subsequent publications, workshops, seminars, and/or shared in person and/or electronically with the public at large. I also give consent that information shared in this interview may be used and further understand that my real name will be disguised whenever the information shared in these interviews is shared with others in any of the aforementioned methods.

This \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

**Witness:**

**Research Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX Y

### WAIVER

As a participant in the research project entitled *Storytelling as a Pastoral Care Intervention that Ministers Healing to Adult Parishioners in a Northwest Georgia Church Who Have Experienced Violence*, I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(*print name*), hereby agree to hold release and hold harmless Rev. Lemora B. Dobbs, St. Paul AME Church-Canton, Inc., The African Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc., Gardner-Webb University, and any and all of their successors, assigns, designees, and/or any other persons associated with any of said entities whether named, unnamed, and/or implied directly and/or indirectly through this research project harmless from any damages and/or injuries physical or otherwise that may arise from my participation in this research project. I also understand that in the future information shared by me in these interviews may appear anonymously in published and/or printed materials and may also be shared anonymously with church congregations and/or the public at large either verbally or in written form. By affixing my signature to this Waiver, I hereby waive my right to pursue any of the aforementioned parties and any of their successors, assigns, designees, and/or any other persons associated with any of said entities whether named, unnamed, and/or implied directly and/or indirectly, through any legal course of action that may arise by my participation in this research project.

This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

**Witness:**

**Research Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX Z

### INTERVIEW #1

**Legend:**                      **R = Researcher**                      **I = Interviewee**

R1:    Tell me about one of your experiences of violence.

I1:    Any time during my life, I assume?

R2:    Yes.

I2:    One that comes to my mind, mostly, is the most recent. It's one I believe I had mentioned to you before, walking into a basketball game, with the laptop in my left hand, in a gym where they were running games across court...two games across the whole full court, which made it a little tight, and the bleachers were very close to the baseline. In fact, there was not enough room for two people to stand parallel and not touch either the bleachers and/or baseline. So, as I walked, I happened to notice that there was a game going on, on this one particular court I had passed. And, so I waited until the team went to the other end and then I tried to scoot on past so I wouldn't interrupt the game. And I happened to also notice that there was a guy that was hollering and screaming, running around half court. And as I approached the court I noticed that he would retreat back to the bleacher area when the team came down to that end of the court, but as they went to the other court, he would get out into the playing area, real close to half court, hollering and screaming. And so, I wanted to avoid him, so I kind of waited for him to go to the other end and walked on by. I was watching out the corner of my eye, trying to get on across, and once he got into my blind sight, he must have come around through my blind sight area, and he grabbed my arm and clinched it. And soon as he did this, I flexed, of course, and began to turn around and he smacked me on the butt. The hardest hit I ever had in my life (chuckle). And by that time I had turned all the way around, faced him, nose to nose, and I thought, "Well, I'm not going to drop this computer," although I started to, because this just was really the only good working laptop we got. So, those kind of thoughts went through my mind, and now a second of course, and so I repositioned my weight so that I could have my right hand free and cocked and that put a lot of pressure on my bad knee and I automatically, subconsciously get off of that when I see myself doing that. So, then I had to rotate back to my left, which is the hand that the computer was in, which gave me no leverage. And so I had to start talking and was like, "What's wrong with you?" And he was like, "Well, did it hurt?" I said, "I'm not sure what that has to do with it. What is wrong with you?" And it was very, very difficult not to get into a very demonstrative mindset, as well as, language. God has been kind of working with me over these last several years and has evolved me quite a bit, in my opinion, in terms of that. And three weeks prior to that, a couple weeks prior to that, I had experienced a situation with my daughter, my 15-year old daughter, who in a basketball game, a girl



swung on her, I mean, just leverage, she didn't make contact. And I had always raised my children, you don't EVER fight! However, you don't ever get hurt. It's more important to me that you don't get hurt, than that you do not fight. However, I know you're smart enough that you know when a fight is getting ready to break off and you can avoid it before it gets to that point. So, you may have to humble yourself in an area or two, and I expect you to do that. However, but if it comes down to it, and you can't avoid it, then I want you to hurt whoever you need to, for you not to get hurt. And I will stand with you, all the way up to the president of the United States if I have to, to defend you. But, don't fight, but protect yourself. And that's pretty much what she did. I was so taken by how she handled it because, they broke them up and they put the girl out. Then another girl swung on her, and I don't remember or recall why she didn't get a technical foul and that she didn't get put out, but she got a chance to swing on her again. So, at that point, my daughter grabbed her. And I'm thinking that she thought, "I've done all that I can to avoid this, I gotta take some action," which is what I told her. After this particular girl swung on her one time, I hollered from the stands, "Don't fight, protect yourself!" Which is what I had been telling her, it was just a reminder. I don't expect you to get hurt and I don't expect you to start anything and in other words, don't worry about getting hurt back, which is tough to do a lot of times. So, she grabbed her and subdued her and picked her up and threw her down and once she hit [the floor], she loosened her grip. And I don't think my daughter's ever been in a fight, so she probably wasn't aware that was going to happen once you hit the ground. But the other girl seemed like she did because she hit and her hands got free. She started swinging at her on the ground and my daughter grabbed her and subdued her again and then flipped her over. And as soon as she cocked her hand back they grabbed her and pulled her off of her. So, I was like really pleased that she did all she could in my mind to avoid the violence until she really had to do something at that point. In fact, some of the teammates were saying that she was scared, or that she can't fight, you know. But all the grown-ups were aware of what happened and was very adamant about how much respect they had for her, and how she handled that girl. And, I cried. I was so pleased with her, in a bad situation and how she handled herself. And so, all of this was kind of going through my mind when this guy grabbed me. Now, all of the parents, and I don't really know them because our court was the next one over, and the girls on the bench and I'm standing over in front of here. And I preached this, right..."Don't fight, avoid it," but he had already hit me. I was helped in a sense because I was challenged with the computer and a bad knee, so that's why I said I had to start talking and now the second time I was like, "What were you thinking? Why would you do that?" And he said something to the extent that, "You walked in front of the coach!" And I'm not sure if it matters, but this was a fairly young black guy, fairly short, very built. A little small in his stature, but built. And being that I'm not a small guy, but a lot older, just as a reference. And the coach that he said I walked in front of, and I did because like I said when I started approaching, normally the coaches if they see you, they will let you go behind them so their view was not blocked, but I guess he didn't see me and I hesitated to give him a chance to move up so I could get by because it

was a restricted area. It wasn't very much room in terms of being restricted. But, he didn't so, I just went on in front of him because I was trying to acknowledge the respect of not coming in front of him, because that's how I was raised. But now this guy is saying you went in front of him, and I'm like what does that have to do with you? And I'm saying, and I said, "Why are you doing this?" And he was like, "Did it hurt?" again. I'm saying, "You don't worry about it hurting, don't you do that again." By that time, my finger was in his chest. And he apologized. I can't remember the words he used but it was an apologetic response. And I went on. It bothered me tremendously to walk away from that, but, I don't know. In retrospect, the only thing I probably would have done differently is call 911 right on the spot. That's what I should have done. I've since gone back to the director and tried to understand what this team was and who this guy was so I could call the cops and press charges perhaps or at least get some kind of peace warrant so that if he ever approaches me again I can feel free to protect myself and not worry about any consequences. At this point if I saw him again and recognized him, I'm pretty sure I'm not going to worry about any consequences because he's already assaulted me. So, that would be the explanation of the most recent violence.

- R2: So, it sounds like had you not had the laptop in your hand and had it not been positioning your weight on your "bad knee," on the left side, that you might have responded instinctively with violence?
- I2: My opinion about situations like that is, you can say what you're gonna do, but in reality when the situation happens, will determine what you're gonna do. But, yes, I would say that because I would have had to hit him with my left hand with any kind of leverage because I can't push off with the other hand as well and as a base, so I would have had to load up my left leg and fire on him. Because the computer was in that hand, I couldn't so I adjusted so I could do that. When I loaded up on my right leg, I felt that pain, so I had to get off of that. So, that was more than a second I'm sure. And, of course my emotions dropped a low during the course of that and during that time I was able to pick up the parents out of the corner of my eye, as well as the kids, out of the corner of my eye. So, all that came into the decision not to respond violently because my adrenaline was pumping to a point that I think I was past the fight or flee syndrome. I wasn't going nowhere. So, the next course would have been, yeah if I was able to...I don't think I would have ever hit him with the computer, although in retrospect I thought about that. That would have been an easier time to save it than to let it drop, at least in my mind.
- R3: So, it also sounds like when you started telling this story, you also told the back story of what had happened just a little previously with your daughter and how she executed what you taught her, which was not to fight, but to protect herself. You were proud of her because she executed what you taught her. And so, I'm wondering how what you taught her and what you saw her do, how did that affect

how you responded, also, along with all the people that you caught in your peripheral vision--the parents and other players?

- I3: I would say that I try hard to practice what I preach before I preach it. Do I always do that? Well, I'm not Jesus. I would probably say I don't. But, the fact that I had affected me. I don't think that any of her team, or her saw it. So, in fact I couldn't get any of the parents to admit they saw it, except for one, and going back to her and saying, listen, I want to try to find out who this guy was and get a police report. And she was like, "Well, I don't know if I would recognize him." That disturbed me, you know. I mean, your kid is out here and you see the violence that is going on. I mean, you saw it against my daughter, you know what I'm saying. That disturbs me for a bit that you wouldn't stand up for me. Even if you couldn't recognize him, I'm sure I could bring him back up in your mind and through explanation if you saw him again. And I don't know if I want to see him again, I don't know how I would respond to that. But like I said, it bothered me. But yeah, I think knowing that I had told her this, that I had preached this, and that she pulled it off perfectly. Man, I felt I had an obligation to represent myself in a certain kind of way. If I had been the same kind of mad man that I had met, then what I'm preaching to other people is very hypocritical. And that's one of the things I try not be, hypocritical with my kids. And I really try hard not to. That's one of the things that's real important to me, to not have a hypocritical nature with my kids. Do I always do that? Probably not. But when I can and I'm conscious, I put a lot of effort into that. I try real hard not to lie to them, I try not to set them up with false expectations of what I've told them or even what I do, but it's my effort. So, yeah, that had a tremendous thing to do with it. Both knowing what I had told and had experienced, also seeing these other girls, because a couple years ago, this may have been more than a few, might even be close to 10, my oldest daughter was playing ball, actually it was about 8 years ago. The director of the league of the organization we were with, seemed to have a problem with me personally. He would never allow us to talk about it up front so there could be some kind of understanding of what the issue was. My strong belief is that he was a little intimidated because he was very aggressive and he managed by intimidation, and I don't respond well to that. Either I remove myself or I make sure that you understand that doesn't just work for me. If we have something we need to deal with, let's just sit down and deal with it as men. Here again, that's my effort. And, in fact, I had talked to my oldest daughter once before that I was saying, "You know he has a problem with me." Because I was a coach and she said, "Dad, everybody knows that he has a problem with you." And she gave me what she thought that problem had stemmed from and I kind of agreed with her. But, we had a game where he started coaching and his "A" team, which he would never let my daughter be on, that she deserved to start on, in my opinion, had a game that was at the same time that was staggered. So he coached about the first quarter and then told me to take over and he challenged me that I better not mess it up. This kind of stuff is normal whereas managed by intimidation. I flicked it off in my normal way. And it went down and he left and we lost that game. My daughter went into the tournament with a twisted ankle

and she twisted the other ankle, and the first one was a really bad one, and this one seemed like it was bad. And she is the kind of person that will push through all that and I saw her trying to push through it. And she really couldn't, she was not effective. And it was down to where the game was really, really tight, with a minute or so left. And the guy who was the president of the organization had his crony sit on the other end of the bench and he was really watching me and questioned every call I made and every decision I made and what not, and he was there, and he was trying to tell me not to take her out because we were needing her defensively, but she wasn't able to perform defensively. And I put a girl in, who happened to be one of the only two Caucasians we had on the team, who travelled all the way from the Carolinas to play with this organization. Extremely good offensively, but was a little slow and didn't play defense. But, I had to put her in because we had my girl that couldn't play. We had another parent who thought I should have played his girl more, and he might would have had a little case for that except she didn't work hard and when she worked hard I played her and when she didn't I would play her, but a little more sparingly. I would tell her I need you to do "x, y and z" when you go in there, because she was skilled, but she just didn't have the drive it seemed. And so, she pointed [was the point guard] and then the game was over. I went over and started talking to the head man and his crony was sitting there. We got to talking and he was having a problem with his crony trying to tell him, using his normal intimidating way, and trying to tell him, "I'm not going to have this on my team." Blah, blah, blah.. and his crony was stepping up to him and I came up and he mentioned to me something about, you know you shouldn't have taken your daughter out. I was like, if you wanted to coach that way then you should have stayed and coached. I coached the way I saw fit. I knew she couldn't play, in fact if you had been coaching I probably would have told you to take her out. Because I didn't want her to get hurt and she was not being effective and she was hurting the team. And then my man, the other guy was like, my man was flaring back like he was wanting to do something and my man mentioned something about getting his piece and what not and I'm like, hold up, hold up...you done with me? So I kind of got away from the conversation. We got back, this was in Augusta. We got back to the Atlanta area and the next tournament we played the very first part of the tournament, he decided he was gonna coach the whole game. He's got his satchel, you know, it's a big guy. Short, but big and he's walking by and I'm noticing him acting a little differently, flexing when he walks and his attitude was a little more intimidating. And so he walked by us a couple of times and you know how somebody actually see's you, but they don't really look at you, just watched you through their peripheral? He was kind of doing that and I picked that up and I was like, what is this about? But, he would do that sometimes. That's how I knew that he was probably intimidated. He went by me and I heard this "thump" and his gun fell right out of his bag in front of this girl sitting next to me on the bench, and I did just what you did, I bucked by eyes. And I'm like, ok, now what do I do here? So he picked it up, and so like I said, I don't know if that was intended for me or his crony. I don't think his crony was on today, so it might have been a grandstand play for everybody to understand who he was, and

that he is in charge because that's how I kinda surmised that. But that made me even more angry then it did anything else. That he would do something like this in front of these kids. I mean, these people are putting the most precious thing in their life in your guard and you're going through some kind of ego trip, for whatever reason I really don't understand. I could guess at it, but, it doesn't make any kind of sense at all. So, I was really mad and I called one of my friends and I was talking to him and I was like, "yeah, I need to get my gun and go to the game...da, da, da." He said, "Yeah man, I agree. You need to get your gun and you and him go and shoot up everybody." And that's when it dawned on me that, wow, I'm taking the same mentality as this fool.

R4: So, it sounds like in that situation where he brought the gun, the gun fell out and all that, that when you recaptured the situation, you saw reflections of him in yourself?

I4: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah! And as I said, that happened way before this situation. That happened years before this situation. And, of course after that happened and after he said that, and after I realized how foolish I was in my response to the violence I perceived someone intended or wanted to at least give a threat of. After a while I had to realize that I was insecure within me and that made me want to respond in that kind of way and it's probably more normal to then not, especially with some men. The testosterone that we have, how dare you threaten me like that? You not gonna scare me, even though you could have picked that up and killed me. If I was scared I would never let you know because that would probably encourage you to do something just as stupid or more stupid, in my opinion. So, where God had me at that time, you know, I was going through a lot of that kind of challenging of myself in terms of understanding that a lot of the anx [anxiety] you feel from so called, "what somebody else does", is really more about what's going on inside of you than with this other person. Because God tells you, you don't have to fret, you don't have to worry, all you need to do is you know, look on me. I was in a real strong walk [with God] in that way that I was really trying to any time I felt any kind of consternation about something out here is to realize that I needed to look at what input, what piece of that I had in that and then deal with that rather than anyone else, because I'm not gonna fix it dealing with them. The only thing I'm gonna do is to try to fight darkness with darkness and in order to do that it was revealed to me, in order to extend darkness, darkness has to be inside of you and once you allow that darkness to be inside of you, it's gonna affect you in a negative way. And it's going to affect you in a negative way, as it is in you. And if you permit it, then it's gonna come back to you here again in some kind of way in time. So, having that happen then and having that experience as a reaction to that and then other experiences leading to this. God has evolved me quite a bit from that point and I can look back in my life prior to that gun falling on the ground and I could speak about a whole lot of things that God has kind of evolved me through in terms of this violence nature, because if I'm serious with myself I know that I was raised in a violent household. My mom and my dad fought all the time verbally, you know. I never saw my parents

physically fight or any hands passed, but, I do remember one time I saw each of them had their hand on the other one and they were just so angry. I was probably 10 or 11, somewhere in there, but as I got grown and left and came back to visit, they had gotten to a point where they were starting to get old and their arguing started to intensify, and it worried me. You know, and I put my foot down and I was like, "Look, you've gotta stop this. You gotta stop it!" So now I'm older and I'm educated, I'm experienced, and I know a little bit more about the world and figured a way I could talk to them that way and they would listen, and they did. So, they stopped arguing. The time or two I came home I was like, it's amazing that they stopped arguing, but it looked like they were gonna divorce. They did not have that outlet and it's worse. It was absolutely worse. I mean, that's the way they dealt with one another all their lives and they were married sixty years before my father passed, and they got married very young. Nineteen? Eighteen? Nineteen? Something like that. And it was just revealed to me that them not arguing wasn't right for right now. Maybe if they could get some counseling, some couch time, or maybe get some help from someone else and some things could happen, they could have evolved to that. But, I don't know if it was the abruptness of stopping the arguments or not. One thing they told me was that they cared about me because they listened to me. And I know it had to be difficult for them not to argue, but they also had to know that that wasn't good. And so they went back to arguing and I remember one time when they were both in wheel chairs we were home to visit. And Fridays we would usually have fish. And they would cook fish. And so they would be at the sink cleaning the fish and washing it, preparing French fries. And my mom turned her wheelchair around to go to the stove and she was having a hard time getting up and they argued right off, and mom goes, "John, push me up!" And he'd say, "Woman you're always fussing!" And he pushed her up and I wanted to cry and laugh at the same time. They still arguing, like, I don't know what, but they were getting along. They couldn't have made it without the other one then, they both were in wheelchairs. So, I had to go with their thing. I mean there are worst things.

R5: So, I want to kind of go back to something you said because I kind of heard this, and you correct me if I'm wrong. I kind of heard this when you talked about the incidences with both of your daughters, what happened with your younger daughter on the court and how she defended herself, and what happened with the coach with your older daughter, when, how he was kind of flexing and how he brought a gun to the game. And it sounds like through that, I heard a thread that said violence is okay as long as I'm protecting myself or my family.

I5: That wasn't a conscious thought. I think as men we are kind of raised that way. In fact, violence as a response to protecting your family is considered normal. I guess, you know, I consider myself a..., "What's the word? What's the word?...I just lost my thought that quick. I consider myself a renaissance man. You know, I'm educated. I come from very country backgrounds and my wife reminded me the other day that I hadn't lost any of that. But, I have again, some sophistication in terms of a few degrees and experience working in corporate America for a long

time and experience in working in the church, which is now a long time. And so, I've been able to, as I indicated earlier, grow out of some of that. There was a time when [being] macho was fashionable and then there came a time when it wasn't. It was made clear to thinking people, a man shouldn't be physically dominating over a woman, beating her up or having his way in that way, whether she submits or not. And the renaissance gander promoted men to find their confidence and self-worth in other places. So, like I said, I'm pleased with how God has worked with me in that area. I would say that there is still work to do, but I ain't mad. So, that's a normal response. In fact, some would applaud you if you use violence to protect your family and some would think you're a punk or something if you didn't. And if you're a real man, you can't worry about either one of what they say, is what I know now.

- R6: So, it sounds like the way you've dealt with the violence has a lot to do with how you were raised and how you experienced violence during your upbringing. You said, "I grew up with violence. There was always violence in my home."
- I6: Yes, violence was in my home, the streets. Yes, it was everywhere. I had a cousin I used to babysit for them. I guess I was about 12, I guess. And I use to sit up at night watching the late night tv, and they would allow me to do that. My brother lived with my grandmother, he might have been grown, but I could have the television after a certain hour. And I heard, "pow, pow, pow!" And I heard what sounded like somebody running. And I used to babysit for them and they lived down the street and my cousin ran all the way around to the back door knocking on the back door. You know, I go to the back door and she was bare-footed and came in. She just ran into the bedroom talking to momma and daddy. I liked B a lot. He used to give me clothes and what not. He was a really nice guy. But, he was a player; he was a pimp, which back in the day that was normal as well. You know a lot of guys had more than one family. As far as I was concerned, mine didn't as far as I knew. And I used to take some pride in that, although my mom says differently. But, B was a player, man, and I never thought he would do something like that though. That bothered me about him and [changed] my opinion of him.
- R7: What did he do? Was he shooting at her?
- I7: That's what I asked. I went to him and asked. I know it ain't none of my business, but man, I like both of ya'll. You know, did you shoot at her? He said, "Nah. She challenged me about some woman and I had enough and you know, I pulled it out and she started running. I just thought I'd help her out on her way."
- R8: So, he was shooting. But he wasn't shooting at her?
- I8: Yes. Yes.
- R9: So, he was shooting up?

I9: Yes. Yes. Firing for effect. That's what they called it in the military. So, I could come up with a lot of stuff. I mean, I know the very first fight I had. My brother was 8 years older than me and he was big, strong. He had several football offers and what not, and I was known as JH's little brother. As a result didn't too many people mess with me. But, one of my peers' older brother, they were all thugs really. I think one of them is on death row. I'm not sure about that. They convinced him that he had to beat me up. Not because he had a problem with me, but because the pecking order of the hood was low. You see, I was bigger than he was. He wasn't that bad of a guy, really. But, he was the youngest and this was his rite of passage with them, I think. And so, you know how that goes, you work it up in school...dah, dah, dah. And I avoided it because my parents were the same with me--"You don't fight! Under no circumstances, you don't fight". And nobody really ever put me in that corner that I couldn't get out of at this stage. It must have been elementary school, or maybe first part of junior high--sixth or seventh grade. And all the way home, half way home, they were able to finally chorale us in a group of people. Up until then I was able to avoid it for whatever reason. He was taunting me, talking about, "I'm gone whip your butt!" I'm like, "Man, what are you talking about? I ain't got no problem with you. You got a problem? What problem you got with me?" And then finally enough people got in front of me where I couldn't keep moving and they had a big circle and we were fighting. And I was thinking about this the other day. And I'm not sure if my brother was actually there or they just told him about it, but he was, matter of fact, I think he was there, but, he was really embarrassed and disappointed in me. As I had never fought before, and we got to fighting and I didn't really know what to do. You know, the only fights I had been in was when my brother would beat me down. You know, being he was older, so I couldn't do anything. If I swung, he'd grab my fist and drag me down, pop me in my chest. So, I never had the experience of wrestling, you know, or sparring, you know, which I got that along the way. But, at this time, I remember he swung and I ducked it and what not and I grabbed him. And I was like told, and religiously took my butt home and washed the dishes, got my homework done and then I could do anything I want. My dad was real clear with that. If you don't come home and wash those dishes first thing and get your work done, and I could pretty much get out of doing homework because I could get it done in class the next day, because they wasn't checking it that hard, but the dishes were pretty obvious. So, I had him, and I was thinking, what am I going to do next? And I said the stupidest thing, "I gotta go home and wash dishes." The whole crowd laughed, just like you are laughing at me! Dobbs. (Chuckles).

R10: I'm laughing with you.

I10: No, you ain't! You started laughing way before I did...(Chuckles). I felt like the biggest fool. And my brother was just disgusted. And I was like, it seems like you would teach a brother how to fight. All you've done is taught me how to take a butt whipping. That's how I thought about that. I started hearing about some of



Ali's trials and tribulations and I was in awe about Ali that I took an interest in him. I used to sell Jet magazines door to door and I took some of my Jet magazine money and made a ring in my yard and I bought the wood and the rope and what not. And there was nobody around, this had to be after this incident. And I was a little older and no one was around while I was doing all the work, and I was buying all the material and what not, it seems. Like, as soon as I hit the last band with the hammer, all of a sudden my fence was lined with people. And the best athlete my age was coming to the ring to fight me. I'm like, how did this happen? I'm supposed to be the promoter. I'm not supposed to be in the ring. That is what I was planning. And the gloves were already there. I had gloves there. I was done. I was getting ready to celebrate and it's like this, I couldn't get out of it. I had to fight him. I hadn't thought about that. The homeboy was whipping people's butts all over everywhere. And we were in there and he threw a fake and knocked me. I mean, he almost knocked me out. I pulled that head thing off, I threw it down. My brother was disgusted again, but this time he was one of those standing on the fence. I knew he was there and he walked away in disgust. And I think at some point I got to him and said, "Well, why didn't you teach me to fight? You're my big brother." And you know, he at some time after that I found out that he started going over to ...what's that? Chocolate Alley? An area where the winos and the drunks hung out and they had started, kids started, that hung out there, he was teaching them how to box. He never taught me. You know, I was so disgusted with him and kinda cut him off after that. I'm like, "how do you do that?" And the guy that he did that with was a year younger than me and I liked him. He was cool. His grandfather lived down the street from my grandmother, so, my brother used to take him up under his arm. What he would never do with me. But, I eventually had to learn how to fight.

- R11: So, it sounds like in your family and in your upbringing there was a great value placed on the ability to defend yourself?
- I11: Uh, I don't know if it's any more than any black family. Especially if you look at slavery and the consequences of that through the years. I will say a part of that violence was depicted in my relationship with my brother tremendously. Like I said, he was 8 years older and he was very fit. He lifted, he played football and if he saw me in his peripheral vision, he would grab me, and beat me until I managed to get out the other side. And I can remember getting to a point, you know, where I would just run and shout, "Daddy! Daddy!" And my father would say, "Oh, take that playing outside." And I'm like, "Playing?" He almost got cussed. "I ain't playing! This boy is killing me!" So, in retrospect, I thought about it. He [my older brother] would hit me in my chest, he didn't hit me in the wrong place, pull me down and take shots all over me.
- R12: So, I'm going to ask you, what the guy asked you when you walked in front of the coach, and he hit you on the butt. He said, "Did it hurt? Did that hurt?"
- I12: With my brother? He didn't physically hurt. He never really physically hurt me.

R13: He didn't hurt you?

I13: That's why I said when I think back at it. He never physically hurt me. His thing, he said, "you know, Mom and dad never let you get out into the street."

R14: He was trying to toughen you up?

I14: He said, "I'm trying to make sure you won't be no punk." I'm like, you need to understand, you're teaching me how to take a butt whipping. You not teaching me anything else. To this day he never really got that. Now, he refuses to admit that he did all that, and he was like that with everybody. Like, all of our relatives. We were sitting around talking, like, when we buried my mom in particular, was the last time and every cousin that came up started talking about, "Yeah, you did, [be]cause you did me the same way." And he considered that was his role. He was older, he was tough, and he went to the marines and came back. And I think he thought he was doing us a service.

R15: So, I'm going to ask you again, and I don't mean physically. Did it hurt?

I15: Oh yeah! Yes. Psychologically, I was getting to that. I didn't get it physically, but, psychologically I would get it, especially with my brother. My brother was raised by my grandma. And he was born during the war period, WWII. And my father went off to fight and my grandmother started taking care of my brother, so my mother could work. And this was a time when my people moved from Alabama to Ohio. When the steel mills were hiring folks to good jobs, to good work. And my great aunt and uncle moved up and got a nice house and got established. And my grandmother moved up not too long after that. My brother was 3 and she took him with her. And my dad was still in the service. And my dad got out and we moved up. And I never could get a straight story, you know, my mother said my grandmother wouldn't let her have him and my grandmother said she didn't want him. My brother believed that she didn't want him and that played out in their relationship, almost up until she died. He rededicated his life to the Lord some years before she died and that's when their relationship started to turn around. I imagine it turned all the way around, but, I'm not sure about that. But, I remember that he, when I was about 6 or 7, he got with some kids who stole. And, up until a year and a half ago, he swore that he wasn't involved with the stealing. And he finally admitted that they gave the bag to him and he held the bag. And I'm like, "Well, you stole man. What are you talking about?" But, I knew all along that he had and that was his story up through the whipping, "I didn't do it! I didn't do it!" And they arrested him and took him downtown. So, my dad was like, you need to come back home. You need to be living up under me. Because he really had it good. Because it was like my grandmother treated him like hers and then my parents treated him like theirs. He was like one of the fewest blacks in my area that had a car in high school. He wore nice clothes. Like, I had one suit and a nice pair of shoes, this brother had three, four

nice suits and he was a lot older. I forgot what I was saying. Oh, did it hurt? So, he did not ever want to be bothered with me because he would have to take care of me. I don't know if he didn't realize that I knew that, but as a younger kid it didn't take long to figure that kind of stuff out. So, dad was like, you gonna come home. And one of the first things he had to do was, "If you go to the movies you gonna have to take him with you." And he didn't want that. So, I did mention his name. You strike his name from the tape. (Laughs).

R16: Ok. Well, without the last name, nobody can find him. We haven't said anything that's identifying.

I16: So, let me just finish this one last point. So, he took me to the show with him and he use to thump me in the back of my head all the time. He would thump me--all of us--Pow! That was fun to him. He would sit behind me, no, first he would sit in front of me. He had this little girl, and he's kissing and hugging and all this stuff and I'm like, "Awww!" So, he got behind me and he's still doing all that and so all of a sudden, he was gonna pay me off for calling him out. So, he hit me in the back of my head. I'm like, "You gonna have to stop that!" And he hit me more. So after a while I was like, "Listen, if you hit me in my head again I'm gonna tell." I had to tell him that because he was taking it to another level back there. So, when I said that, he hit me anyway and then he went up in the balcony and left me down there. But I told anyway. And so, I don't remember if he got punishment or how he got punished. But he was able convince my grandmother that they [my parents] didn't really want him and all they wanted was for him to take care of me and somehow they convinced my dad to loosen up and let him come back over there. So, he ended up staying with them.

R17: So, tell me how the psychological effects impacted you. What's in my mind and heart is the word, humiliation.

I17: Yes. I can speak to that easily.

R18: Tell me how that has affected how you respond when someone perpetrates some type of violence against you now?

I18: Now, it's a whole different deal. I'm still in discovery with who I am with that, especially with considering this last situation. It was extremely humiliating. In fact, I believe the guy is gay and it was a come on to him. And as I sit and start thinking about it as he was watching my daughter's game, he was running out on the court. And I'm thinking, this guy isn't right. Somebody needs to deal with this guy. And he saw me out the corner of his eye and he was like, he has this somewhat of a dazed look in his eye and he has his shirt up and his pants were down like at the crack of his a\*&! I mean, (laughs) at the crack of his a\*&--that ain't not curse word anyway. That's my story and I'm sticking to it. And I'm like, ok, this must be what this is all about. So that was able to take some of the humiliation away right then, because I'm like, I don't want what you've got and

you don't want what I've got. That's the end of that except you ain't gotta hit me. I would say with my brother, that was a problem for a long time in terms of me understanding my abilities and walking with them with confidence, you know. I was told in terms of that, as well as verbally, that I would never be the man my brother is, you'll never be a football player like your brother...dah, dah, dah. And I did not know the athletic ability I had until played in college. I quit college ball after I hurt my knee. No, I hadn't hurt my knee yet. After I quit college ball and was playing (I may have hurt my knee by then). I used to play pick up in the offseason with football players and they were all very good athletes. Most of them played football and basketball in high school and probably could have played both, but football was the better. And they use to tell me, "Man, why you quit football? You were a good athlete...dah, dah, dah," because I would school them. Then I started realizing after I hurt my knee, and it was really bad, that I realized how athletic I was. And then again I began to lose that lack of confidence because I could still play. Once I recovered I would re-injure it a lot, but when it was good, even though I lost a step and I lost some agility, I could still deal with folk and so that helped in terms of that. And, I think one of the reasons why I excelled in school, to the extent that I did, which wasn't until I ended up with that 1.98 in college and then had to raise the real question about what I was going to do and made the decision that I was going to graduate and got serious, got a job and worked 40 hours a week, 19 hours of school the last 2 or 3 years probably had about a 3.8, close to a 4.0 in my major. I majored in math, so I was always considered very, very smart and I used to tell people just [be]cause you can do math well doesn't mean that you're smart. There are some stupid people that can do math. And I never would wear that ability on my sleeve. It was always something I had that I was confident with. But, I didn't need people to evaluate me based on that. Even with working with IBM. People used to think you were extremely special if you worked for IBM. I could take my IBM badge and go to a bank and get a check cashed during that time. It's different now with all the fraud laws and what not. I used to tell them, "Naw, it's no big thing, it's just something that I do." And probably could have done more better if I had been stronger about my talents and could have been less humble in some areas. Because of that, the effects of that humiliation, I think, and when I look at it now, I'm pretty sure that's what it was. When I got ready to get out of college, I got a hold of some self-help tapes. Bob Procter, I think he was big with, "The Secret." He came up with, "The Secret." This was way before then. I got a hold of his tape and started looking at them kind of people. Dale Carnegie and "7 Habits" by Covey, and I just dug into it and read books and listened to tapes. When I started IBM I use to take all the self-help classes and ended up writing a book that was pretty much self-help in origin and all of that helped with that.

- R19: So, if there was one thing that you wished, if there was one thing you wished that had happened to help you deal with the humiliation you experienced as a result of violence, what would that one thing have been?

I19: I think violence was less of a problem than humiliation, unless we want to consider verbal violence or verbal loration, unless we want to consider that violence. That would probably be the area I would think about and I would probably need to give that some thought. I mean, the first one that comes up in my mind, was two different ones, one probably helped me get over the other one. I used to want to be a doctor, you know. And my mom, she went to about 6th grade, one of the smartest people I've known, but she had a mental block for math. And she worked in the hospital a long time as a maid and she started going down the path to being a nurse's aide and she failed the math test and that just blew her. So, she never really had confidence in her academic side and she would tell me, she thought she was of the genre, I know that was typical in some black families, they thought if you went and got too much education you'd go crazy. I'm not sure if you've experienced that, but that comes from slavery again. They used to convince us that if we couldn't learn and if we got too much learning, instead of saying you'd be more powerful than us, they'd say, you gone go crazy. And she really believed that. I remember a friend of mine's brother got a scholarship at Ohio State, you know. He was all academic everything in high school and he went up and got on a bad track and started writing bad checks and that was the first thing my mom said, "Yeah, he's just had too much education." So, when I would say I want to be a doctor, she would say, "Now baby, you don't try to be a doctor. You just get you a degree." And that hurt. And I knew that had very little to do with me and had more to do with what she felt about herself. But that still affected me. And she would say stuff like that and other stuff that's maybe more damning than that. But then I had a friend of mine that I grew up with. We got up to get ready to go to school and he graduated a year before I did. And I think he was the next to the youngest of his family. But his parents were always uppity and always tried to say that their kids were better. I was like, I'm gonna send my application in, went down to visit the football team and what not, they'd say you can maybe try to come and walk on. I was getting excited you know. I had taken the ACT and did well on that. Ended up taking it for some other folk. And some kind of demonic force or another. I don't know but she'd go, "Why you wanna go to college?" I'm like, crazy question—that's what I'm thinking. And then she said, "You ain't gone graduate no way." And for a nanosecond that hurt. Until I realized she's coming through her pain, her frustration of herself, maybe her kids. She always seemed to be a little off. And come to find out her husband had been gay, got caught on some sodomy charges after that. And I could just imagine what she had been going through with all that kind of nonsense. So, I was able to dismiss that and that helped me dismiss some other stuff.

R20: So, if I'm hearing you correctly, the verbal assault or abuse hurt you more then, much more than anything else?

I20: That's what the experts say, right?

R21: And it hurt your self-esteem?

I21: No doubt, no doubt. But, like I said, got a hold of my self-help books and realized when I got ready to graduate, before I got ready to graduate, after 6 years, and looked at corporate America and looked at myself and I realized that I had to change a lot of things. I mean, I was walking around with a scraggly beard and afro and working 40 hours a week and going to school, a typical student, jeans every day or whatever. So, I started reading self-help materials. The first interview I had with IBM, the guy stopped in the middle of the interview. I had a brown leisure suit on with a flowered silk shirt, green and purple shirt and a velvet bowtie. And at the interview everyone sat and laughed. In fact, I didn't know I was able to graduate. This was my 6<sup>th</sup> year. They changed from semesters to quarters, or the other way around so I had to check my hours because I wasn't gonna have them take none of my hours. And when I checked them, I realized that "Man, I can graduate in June." So, I changed my whole frame of mind and I just started taking interviews. And I took interviews with anyone looking for math majors. And IBM wanted math majors. And the guy was looking over at me kind of funny, but seemed like a really nice guy. A white guy. He stopped the interview and he had the mentality, respect and love to be able to criticize me constructively in a way that I could accept it. He said pretty much that the leisure suit is all wrong, you need to go and get this kind of suit, you need to present yourself this kind of way. Because I hadn't been to any of the placement services or anything, I just stared going, just aggressively started going after it. So, I just asked him, "So, what about the beard?" since he talked to me about everything else. Like, I can't change the color of my skin, that's pretty much a sealed deal. You know, you can't change the color of your skin. He was like, "I don't have a problem with your beard, but you gotta realize that some people gone have a problem with the color of your skin, some people gone have a problem with your beard. That will just be a chance you have to take." So, that's when I shaved it off and started being conscious and started my excursion out of my metamorphosis...out of the incubator and the self-help tapes. One of my frat brothers had this Proctor tape and we would, all of us would, start getting into listening to it and there were a few things that struck me, "The Man in The Glass." If you can get what you want, the struggle with self, the world makes you king for a day. Just go look in the mirror and look at yourself and see what the man has to say." And that set me off into that introverted, or inner look excursion and I suppose I still do that. So yeah, verbal--I think verbal holds way more. And you heal a lot easier in most cases with physical, unless it's just devastating o your physical.

R22: And so, I'm trying to just connect some dots right now. The experience that you first began to share, it sounds like it was more humiliating then anything.

I22: It hurt.

R23: It hurt. So. it physically hurt?

- I23: Oh yeah. It hurt! I ain't never been hit that hard, especially on the butt. But I have fairly high tolerance for pain, physical pain. I don't ever want to have a high tolerance for emotional pain. So, that would be something I would work at. Work at being emotionally strong, but I ain't trying to be hurt.
- R24: So, tell me, name your feelings when the guy hit you. It was physical pain, but what else was going on?
- I24: It was physical pain and humiliation.
- R25: And humiliation?
- I25: In front of all these people you hit me on my butt.
- R26: Yeah. Yeah.
- I26: I'm trying not to cuss now...(laughs). How dare you? At this stage of my life?
- R27: Yeah.
- I27: I'm too old for that. Shoot, I haven't fought since junior high and I generally don't get upset like that. I generally can see that from afar and I can generally figure something out because most of the people like that are very, very insecure. If you know the direction that things are going in, it kind of gives you the upper hand and if you're confident in yourself, I really don't have to worry what you say to me. I'm not going to give you that kind of power if I can help it. You might be able to figure out how to say something to get to me, but if I don't care nothing about you that will be alright. Now, if it's someone I care about that's a different story. It's probably just the opposite.
- R28: We're coming to kind of a stopping point, a closing time.
- I28: It's your dime.
- R29: And I just wonder if there's anything else that any other memories might have been stirring up because you've been sharing. You've shared a wide range of your life and different instances that have happened, mostly emotionally damaging. Some physical, but sounds like the humiliation of it all was the biggest part and has had the most negative affect on you. Although it seems like from an early age you figured out a way to think your way out of situations.
- I29: Well, let me tell you this--and I have been saying what was stirred up until this point and what you just stirred up was my way out of that, and that was the word of God. You know, my grandmother, I've mentioned this a lot of times. My cousins wanted to join the church and I wanted to join because they wanted to join. My grandmother knew that and she was very upset with me that that was the

only reason I wanted to join. And she challenged me and I lied and she knew I was lying. And because she knew I was lying she called me up and said, "You're not going to play with my God. You gone read this bible every day." And I said, "I don't understand it." And she would say, "I don't care if you understand or not, read it." I'd say, "I'm just confused." She would say, "Let it be confusing. If you don't read noting but a scripture a night. You gone read this bible every night, and you gone pray." "I don't know how to pray." "Well, here's how you pray. You love everybody. You tell God to bless everybody, your kinfolks, your enemies." I'd say, "Why my enemies?" "[She'd say,] "[Be]cause, that's what you're supposed to do." And because I didn't want to admit that I was lying, is really the reason why I read that scripture every night, because I wanted to prove to her that I wasn't going to play with her God. And, as a result, I had to be about 7 or 8 maybe, maybe a little older, but I remember going through school and having conversation with God. I mean, that just built up the spirit of God in my spirit. In ways that I didn't even understand. So, over the course of life there were certain things that I just wouldn't do and it wouldn't be a conscious thing, it would just be that I just didn't do them. I started in Matthew, and I don't remember how far I got, but by the time I started becoming interested in girls, that reading the bible was just not there anymore. And I often try to think about at what age I stopped doing that, but it was significant enough because I can remember walking to school and some stuff would happen and I'd go to God and start thinking about it. I would say, "Well, God what am I going to do? That doesn't make any sense." And I can remember God talking to me, so that was my way out.

R30: So, it was the word of God and what you learned from studying and reading the word, not so much your intellect that helped you get out of your situation?

I30: That's my point. That's my point. If you think about it, you can hear that when I'm talking, especially if I'm talking about the bible, talking about God. That's not now and a lot of that I didn't understand back then. A lot of it, more recently, I understand. I think the, "Experiencing God" course is when it really started opening up the value that was. I think I knew it intrinsically, but became more conscious once I started going through that study and became more into the word and more into an awareness of the word in me.

R31: Any parting comments or questions you have?

I31: I'm good, just that there're very few people who can get this depth out of me. I love you so that's why you can. (Laughs).

R32: I'm honored that you would share as much as you have with me.

I32: I didn't say it for that reason. I just want to support you.

R33: Well, I appreciate it.



## APPENDIX AA

### INTERVIEW #2

**Legend:**                      **R = Researcher**                      **I = Interviewee**

- R1: Tell me about one of your experiences with violence.
- I1: Well, I grew up with a sister who was just very violent towards me, throughout our entire childhood and into our adult years.
- R2: Tell me more about that. She was violent towards you and in what way?
- I2: Physically she would hit me, push me and shove me, usually for no reason and usually from behind. So, whenever she felt it was clear, like we had an older brother, and whenever he wasn't around, she would make her move so to speak.
- R3: So, tell me how you felt. What were your emotions when that was happening?
- I3: I felt bad. I never understood why, to this day and I would want it to stop and it seemed like no one would stop her. My mother categorized it as us fighting all the time, but we weren't fighting. She was physically attacking me and I would defend myself. But to just get up and just put up our dukes to fight, that didn't happen.
- R4: So, it sounds like you told your mother about what was happening.
- I4: Yeah, pretty much.
- R5: What was your mother's response?
- I5: Usually like, "Go to your room." "Go to bed." You know, occasionally she'd separate us. But, she took it as, you know, as us just fighting all the time.
- R6: So, it was deeper than that.
- I6: Much deeper.
- R7: This was an older sister?
- I7: Yeah. We're only a year apart. A year and twenty-two days actually. And, my mother raised us like twins, and we weren't twins. We were very different in abilities, personalities. We had nothing in common. But she was always, like, when we went to play, she wanted us to stay together and we would go places

together, where my sister would make me miserable and we just didn't get along. After about a hundred years of therapy, I've accepted that she was jealous, for whatever reason. And a lot of people tried to convince me, but I couldn't go with that. But, ultimately, I accepted that it was jealousy.

R8: So, tell me about your relationship with your sister now.

I8: We don't have one. She started a fight at my mother's funeral and my father passed first, and then my mother passed away. And so, I pretty much considered that the end of the relationship with her and my other brother, my younger brother.

R9: Have you spoken to your sister since that time?

I9: Yeah, we spoke. I think she called. My mother passed in March and she called in November. She called Thanksgiving to say, "Happy Thanksgiving." And she kind of does things. She tries to humiliate you in some way and then she will let time pass and act like nothing happened, and call you up out of the blue. But, the last time we spoke, she had done something offensive to my son and we had words and we haven't spoke since November of that year. Three years ago.

R10: That's how long ago your mom passed away?

I10: Uh huh. Well, that's how long our last conversation was.

R11: So, tell me how long the physical abuse took place when you were growing up.

I12: I think the last physical fight was, I think we were 15 and 16. She punched me in my eye in church. And that was the last physical altercation I believe. But, there were times when it could've gotten physical, but I didn't, I just ignored her.

R12: So tell me what affect this has had on you and the way you interact with other people. Tell me if it hurt physically or if it was more emotional pain. Tell me more about it.

I12: I think it was more emotional pain. Well, like I said, she would attack me wherever she felt it was necessary I guess. Like I said, we fought in the street which was a big no no with my dad. But, I don't know if my parents even realized that it wasn't a fight. But it just made me feel really bad. And as we got older, she would say awful things to me. She was very verbally abusive. Dealing with her verbally was just as painful as dealing with her physically. And she'd say stuff like, "We could never be friends." And stuff like that. But, when we were both pregnant with our sons, well, with her first son, at the same time, and she thought I was gonna find out. I got an ultrasound to find out if I was having a boy or girl, and she didn't want to know because she felt whatever I was having, she was gonna have the opposite. And she said when we were talking about it, "you

always get what I want.” So, after years of people telling me she was jealous and not believing it, that kinda solidified it, you know. But she had nothing to be jealous of. And God is good. She had a good job and she and her husband had good jobs, good money and they had two sons. But if you look at the big picture, I had the better child. He is respectful, he is intelligent, and he’s hard working. And her two sons, I don’t know what’s going on with them and I realize that she might have been jealous about D also. I’m sorry--about my son also. Our last interaction, she did something that he found very embarrassing and so that’s what kinda set me off after her. And I don’t remember what was going on with her, because there is a lot of mental illness in the family, but she became very negative about our parents and she was talking about them horribly and this and that and the other. And there’s a lot of things I could be upset with my parents about, but the fact that they raised her, because she was difficult with everybody, it wasn’t just me. It’s just I dealt with the most because we shared a room, we were two girls, two sisters so there was just a lot of negative energy going on with her. And it’s like I was taking a lot of it on myself emotionally. When I realized it was really her and not me, in a way it made me feel better, but in a way it made me feel sad, it kinda depressed me. So, I just look at her interactions. One time we were having a verbal argument and our sons were in the room, and, they were four. And my son was standing with me and holding me and crying, and her son was watching TV like, “it’s Tuesday.” So, that scared me or concerned me of how much of that he sees. But, I can’t get caught up in her drama. But it was really interesting and the worst outcome of it is that it made my relationship with my mother very bad because I felt like she didn’t care. Like, there were other instances with relatives, with her relatives, and I felt like she wasn’t protecting me or concerned about my well-being. And my relationship with my sister was a perfect example of her lack of concern. And, I will also say that she was the only girl. So maybe she just didn’t know how sisters are really supposed to act. You see people write cards and read books, but if you’re not in it, you think that all those things you read is how all sisters are, and apparently it’s not.

R13: This sister that you had, this lifelong tension that you suffered abuse from, is that your only sister?

I13: Yes. We were the, “Even S’s”. There were two boys and two girls. And that’s why when I was pregnant, she just knew, because my parents had two grandchildren, a grandson and a granddaughter. And my sister and I were pregnant, so we figured it was going to be a boy and a girl. So, she figured if I was having a boy that meant she was having a girl. But, God does some funny things cause, I ended up having a boy and later on I miscarried a girl. But my sister had two sons, and my younger brother had two daughters, so we were even. But it just wasn’t the way you would think.

R14: Have you ever told anyone outside of your family or your mom how your sister treated you and how she was physically abusive?

I14: Well, I've talked about it in years of therapy and it still hasn't ended. But, everyone knew. Everybody knew that my sister was abusive and that my mother allowed it because she would do it in public. She didn't care where we were. If she felt like hitting me, she was gonna haul off and hit me and do whatever she wanted, say whatever she wanted, and people knew it. And when my mother passed, a lot of her friends' children we grew up with were telling me that they didn't like coming to our house because they didn't like how my sister would treat me. And these people are my age, however they knew us as children. And the comments, and there were times when older people and neighbors would bring it to my mother's attention, but she pretty much would direct her anger towards me like, "Stop acting sad." or "Stop acting up." And, I honestly believe also, it's not just that she didn't think it was wrong, but my sister was very combative. And I believe that my mother was more afraid of her. Like, one time me and sister were talking as adults and I was like, "Well, you know, Mommy didn't like me." And she said, "Well, do you think she liked me?" And I was like, "No, she was afraid of you." And I think her overall attitude was, "I don't care what she's doing to you, as long as she's not messing with me.", you know. And, so, she got away with it, pretty much with murder. And after years of therapy, several doctors have diagnosed me with PTSD. Because my sister, when she would do these things, there was never a sign that it was getting ready to happen. She just would flip out of nowhere and just act out in public, private or whatever.

R15: So, not only was it abusive, but it was traumatic?

I15: Very.

R16: So, does your sister have a mental illness?

I16: I don't know. If she did she wouldn't tell me. People I've talked to say it sounds like bipolar disorder or something along those lines but, and I don't know. I don't know if I should say she became a police officer, and she was involved with a couple of shootings and went through therapy. And I don't know if this is a product of that. But, every now and then she would say something that made me think she was doing that--some kind of self-evaluation or talking to some professional. Because she would make comments, like one of the most recent ones was, "When we were kids, why didn't you fight me back? You were bigger than I was." Spoken like a true abuser, but I'm like, I never responded. I acted as if I never heard it.

R17: Why didn't you fight her back?

I17: I did fight her back. It was not like I was standing there with my hands in my pockets. But, actually, the thought of hitting someone with the intention of hurting them upsets me. Even when D was a child and he needed butt spankings, and he needed them, I would call my mother crying. You know, I didn't want...(crying)

R18: ...To spank him?

I18: I knew I needed to but I couldn't. I don't know if that was a result of growing up...(sobbing), but I just couldn't. The thought of intending to inflict pain on someone just is beyond me.

R19: Where do you think that comes from?

I19: I think from being beat up all the time. It's like I thought about writing a book, because I want something, I want something to make parents look at their children. Look at them, don't just hurt them. We have other relatives where there are boys, and one boy is really tall and the other boy is really short. There're two sets. And my mother would criticize with her friends and other family members how the mother ignored the fact that the big kid was beating up on the little kid. And I would take it as, "Do you not see what is going on here?" And I think the issue was lost over the fact that I was the bigger child.

R20: You're bigger in stature?

I20: Yes. We started off that way. My sister was a very puny child. She was premature, blah, blah, blah. And, I was normal size. But, I think after the abuse started, I started to gain weight. And she started to get bigger, but she went into the police academy and went from a size 16 to a size 8 in 6 months. But, you know, it's not about physical stature. When I talked to some people, they thought it was funny that I was bigger and I didn't beat her up but, just the thought of hitting her with the intentions really bothers me. And, one time she asked me why didn't I beat her up, and I remember thinking, if I ever got the best of you, I don't think I'd stop beating until you stopped breathing. I probably would have killed her. And I didn't want to do that to my mother, my father, or the family. But, I mean, left alone now, I would say I still have the same kind of anger towards her. I think it's best to just stay away from her. I don't like to hurt people's feelings and I really don't like to hurt people physically. So, you know, that's pretty much that.

R21: So, it sounds like the abuse you suffered from your sister has affected the rest of your whole life.

I21: Yes, I was talking to my best friend from high school. And she got married right after high school and she moved to Biloxi, MS because he was in the military. And I remember she came home one time because he had beat her. And when he beat her, I think she was in her second trimester of her second pregnancy. And there's a whole psychological issue around that. But, I remember thinking, I knew he loved her right from the start, but the fact that he beat her, and I don't ever say anything to my married friends about their marriages. And, you know the way men seem to freely beat women, or hit you or something. They always

want to. You know, I don't think I could ever tolerate being hit or beat by a man. And I was afraid to get married because it seems at some point, there's always one. You know, my parents were married for almost a hundred years and there was one time my father decided to beat my mother, and I think that he was drinking. But, I know what was in my head that started it off where the ass whipping turned into a fight, because she wasn't going down without a fight. But the fact that you even have to fight to make it through a day or a moment you know, I can't imagine that.

R22: Were you living in the house when this happened?

I22: Yes. I was about 11 or 12. And it was over something my sister did, but my father was drinking. And I didn't realize until I was an adult that he had a drinking problem. So, we just thought he would come home doing crazy things. When he was in a bad mood, he would put me and my sister out like at 2 or 3 in the morning, with our night clothes on, in the winter. And we lived in the projects, so you'd go sit in the staircase because it was freezing cold, no place to sit down. And our neighbor would take us in. After she heard our front door slam, she would come and get us. But, I didn't realize he was drinking until I was in my twenties, but this happened from middle teen years until adulthood.

R23: So, it sounds like it wasn't just your sister? It was also your father, with those instances.

I23: Well, I didn't consider those violent. Other than the fight with my mother, I didn't consider him a violent person. He spanked us. He didn't beat us unnecessarily. He didn't beat us excessively. But, he would give you a whack to let you know you're talking out of turn or something. He was very good with punishment, but he wasn't very physically abusive. I don't think I ever remember him ever putting his hands on my brothers. But my sister and I were more of a challenge, especially my sister.

R24: So, what reason did he give you, if any, for making you go outside in the cold at night?

I24: Usually, the next day my mother would come to our neighbor's house and tell us to come home and say that he didn't remember. So, he did it one time. My first year of college, he did it several times and I ended up leaving the house because I was trying to finish school and these 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning "put outs," I couldn't do it.

R25: So, he never said anything before? He just said, "Get out." He didn't say, "I'm putting you out because...?"

I25: No, he would just say, "Get out of here!" He would fuss, there was always a fussing or a lecture. He would say, "Get out." You know, and we would go to get

dressed and he would say, “No, leave the way you came.” And I think that was his way of keeping us from really going far. And, I don’t know what he thought we were gonna do on the staircase at 3 o’clock in the morning in our nightclothes, but it happened quite a few times. You know, I guess he just knew that my neighbor would take us in. And she was a single mother who lived next door to us. She was like my second mother. But, that was about it. He wasn’t physically abusive. I don’t know. In the scheme of black men, I think he deserved a medal because I can’t imagine any man that would not have killed a daughter like my sister. She would give him word for word, say whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted. And the fact that he didn’t kill her was pretty good. I don’t know too many black men that would have put up with that. And even at an early age, I can remember her talking back to him, at the age of 6 and 7, and I was like, “Where did they find her?”

R26: Did you ever talk to your dad about your sister beating up on you?

I26: Well, you know, we weren’t very communicative with him as children and not much as adults. And as an adult, especially after I had D, my whole attitude towards my father was more of gratitude than anything else. Through the sixties and seventies when people’s fathers were in and out of their lives, in jail, or not there at all, my father was always there. I told my friends on Facebook, I thought their fathers were dying. This is when the divorce rate started taking off. You know, all of a sudden, you just didn’t see Mr. So and So. And knowing as an adult what was going on and what happened, and my father stayed. He stayed. He took pride to say that he worked 3 jobs to support 6 people, who 5 of them didn’t like him. Because he just seemed like a mean, strict person. But, of course, as I became a mother there was so much more understanding. And there were times that my father was very hard on my sister. And as a child I didn’t understand and as a young adult I didn’t understand. But when I became a mother, I feel like he was protecting me, you know. My mother didn’t do anything to stop my sister, maybe my father was protecting me. Maybe he was harder on her because he knew how hard she was on me, and he saw how my mother was allowing it. And I never heard them have words about it or discuss it, but the things he would do, you know, showed me. When I was 8 we had a fight and I went to tell my mother and she sent us back to our room. And, the next morning my father kept telling me to go wash my face and I kept washing it. And, then mother gets up and realizes I have a black eye. And they didn’t say anything. But at dinner that night my mother would ask my sister, “Well, what did you hit her with?” And my sister said, “My fist!” And my father knocked, he knocked her right off her chair. We were at the dinner table. And he didn’t even look up, he just knocked her off the chair. And if that kind of stuff happened today, I think that my mother, my sister and I would have been removed from the home. I know that for a fact. And I don’t know what my mother should have done, but she should have done something. But she did nothing.

R27: What would you have liked for your mother to do in that situation?

- I27: I don't know. Because I started to really dislike my mother. I was hating her, emphatically. But when I had D, [he] went through a spurt where he had a behavioral problem and it made me think about my mother. Like, what would I have done if I had to raise her, my sister? D turned out fine. With some prayer and some counseling, you know, and he turned around, but my sister. What would I have done if I had a child like that? And my heart went out to my mother for that. The fact that she raised my sister, you know, and she just didn't want no turbulence. But my sister brought it every time. Even at her funeral, my sister gets up and shows out. But the fact that my father was able to raise her up until the age of 24, and he didn't kill her, that was really something. And she had become a cop and for some reason she wanted to confront him about her relationship with him. And she was mad because we didn't stay in the room. My mother worked at night, and we all went to our room and my sister and my father are having this conversation. She didn't live in the house anymore and the next day she called talking about that she was mad because he kept saying that he didn't remember. And a lot of stuff he did to her he'd say he wasn't drunk, but he said he didn't remember. But then when I'd confront her about some things she'd say she didn't remember. So, I really believe she has a horrible memory. You know, like I told her sometimes, "You don't remember what you had for breakfast this morning." I would do things when my parents went out, soon as they left so that if my sister says, "I'm gonna tell mommy." by the time they got home, she'd forgotten. So that meant, do your dirt early. But she can't understand him not remembering, but she doesn't remember. But, I just don't know now. It's just scary.
- R28: Have you ever told anyone outside of your mom and therapist (you mentioned you had been in therapy for many years). Have you ever told anyone outside those circles about your sister and what she did to you?
- I28: Yeah, I think I talk about her too much. I still talk about it like it happened today. But then sometimes new memories come to mind and I'm like, "Oh my gosh!" This week's memory was we were growing up, but we were still living at home and my father was talking to us, giving us a lecture. And he was telling my sister to go to church early, and when she is in church to talk to God about something. And my sister who considered herself a spiritual person, I don't know how, she was telling him, "How dare you tell me what to talk to God about?" And she just went on and on. Well, the end result was he said to her, "Now I know you hate me just as much as I hate you." And I was like, I was sitting there, and all I could say was, "Wow! Wow!" And she is still upset about that. We have had some family time with my father. At the end my father thanked her and her husband for taking us around and making it a fun time for us. And so, later on she refers to it saying, "All I can hear him saying is, 'You hate me as much as I hate you.'" And I'm like, he kept it real. Like she doesn't know why people say these things about her. And I'm like, were you not there? Do you not see yourself? Do you not hear yourself? And I believe she does not. And she doesn't realize how bad it



was. And out of all of our 50 some odd years together, a few years ago, she had to actually apologize to me about, not about the life-long torment, but about something that happened recently. Like, I think I had told you that my oldest brother is missing. We haven't seen him since 2001. And I wanted her to help find him. She's a cop, she's got connections. Let's help find him. And she was like, "No, why do we need to find him?" And I'm like, "Because he needs to know we love him and we're ok, and I need to know he's ok." And she says, "Well don't ever come looking for me if I disappear." And my thought was that I don't have to. You have a husband and two children. Let them look for you, but my brother has no one. He abandoned his kids and they have very negative feelings about him. But, I want him to know that wherever he is, "I love you, and you know, I want to bring you to Georgia and all that good stuff." And she says something like, "Well, don't come looking for me and if I die don't cry and be all upset about it either." And I'm like, whatever. And about an hour later she calls and apologizes for that, which is the first apology she's ever given me in life. But she doesn't see that she is the reason why people treat her the way that they do and most often they're stand-offish. Because at my mother's funeral, well, before her funeral, I was going to counseling and I talked to my doctor about this and his comment was, "Stay away from her. Just stay out of her line of view. Stay away from her." And what happened was, at my mother's funeral, a lot of my friends, one friend in particular I met in the second grade, and she came to the funeral. There were four good, good friends and we were sitting together and my sister and her husband sat across from me and my friend and I was like, "I need to move." My first thought was, I need to move. And when I got up to move, someone sat where I was gonna sit, so I just went back to my seat, but it shows that I should have moved. And we were all talking and having a good time and then my sister stands up and started going off on me. She has to announce to everyone in the room that I'm homeless and that she has been sending us money. And I went to go to her because D had been spending his money, just paying too much. I knew she would give it to us because my sister is just so generous, but I believe it's mostly out of guilt, but I took advantage of it. But, she felt the need to announce it to everyone. How much money she gave me to come home for the funeral and all this other stuff. And I believe it's because I'm here with my friends and she's got her husband of twenty some odd years and she's got her two boys, but there's nobody else there for her. You know, my younger brother has his frat brothers and got his mason brothers, but me, I had friends, real friends and she, it's just her and her immediate family. I can believe that's another situation where jealousy became obvious. But, one thing good about it, is my friends know that I wasn't just making this up. Even D was like a part of me was thinking you were exaggerating. And I was like, there is no exaggeration with her.

- R29: I was wondering a couple of things. One, I was wondering how you felt at church when people at church saw how she treated you and it seemed to be ok.
- I29: Well, the church people didn't see it. I won't say she didn't do it on Sunday. Like, when she hit me in the eye, it was a Sunday. It wasn't a Sunday. It was

another day during the week. We used to have day camp (we called Vacation Bible School in New York day camp). The church would host it and you go through the whole summer with the kids. So, the kids saw it and the other counselors saw it. And I should throw in the fact that there was a young man that I was very interested in and she said later on that she did it to impress him. She'd stolen boyfriends or tried to steal boyfriends from me before.

R30: She done it to impress him by punching you?

I30: Yes. Yep. Because we were walking down a hallway going to the kitchen to get food to give out for our kids' breakfast. She was in front of me and I was behind her. He came out of his room and two seconds later she turned around and punched me in my eye. And later on, she said she did it to impress him. I can't believe she still brings it up, but she does. And there were other boyfriends that she decided she was gonna take or try to take, and it's like, you know. Life with her was hell.

R31: The other thing I want to ask you before I go to that is what you mentioned earlier. You said, it seems like it was yesterday or today, that it happened today. Tell me a little bit more about that.

I31: Well, I've learned the art of, not forgive and forget, but, why you need to forget. And I remember in massage therapy school, there was a lesson we were taking that said that the brain does not know the difference between an occurrence and a memory. And so, that's why you get the same kind of hormonal reaction and the same kind of emotional. And so I can think about it today and I think it was the one about, I forget which one, but, I have a memory, and it seems as though it is just happening, and I know it is for that reason. So, I started wearing rubber bands, as a behavioral model, so when I found myself romancing the experience, I just have to snap my little rubber band. And I snapped it so much one day I thought my hand was going to fall off, you know. But, it's just like it's happening over and over again. And I don't know if she has a split personality or anything, but her face even changes. Like you can see she's getting ready to get mad, or she's mad. I could be talking to her or somebody could say something and she, you'll see her face and it changes in the way it looks. I wouldn't say evil, but it looks angry. And the thought in my head whenever I see that face is always, uh oh, so you know what's gonna happen now. So I was like, ugh! So, that was the thought, like it was yesterday.

R32: So, what is it like for you to live with this on a daily basis?

I32: Painful. Very painful. I think about D. Like, now I don't know why I'm overly concerned with dying. But, if I die he has no family. There's a slight connection between him and my older brother's daughter, because they're both super geniuses and they're very dorky and into cartoons and animation, So I think they have a connection somewhere. He has no connection with any of the other

cousins, and so I feel like it's just me. I forgot why I went on that track. What did you ask me?

R33: What is it like for you to live with these memories on a daily basis?

I33: Oh, and as much as I don't want him to be alone, I am glad I didn't have any other children. You know, because first, I can't imagine loving anyone the way I love D. And, I used to tell my friends that when you get pregnant, your heart is growing too to make room for the additional children. Because, like, when you have the first one, which, I'm sure, you know, that's your first, your all, your everything, this little being. But, then you have another one and God makes room. The heart grows and the new baby is coming. But, I could never, even when I was pregnant, I could never imagine loving anyone the way I love D. And as my mother, my older brother, is my mother's everything. My sister used to joke that my mother would have named him Jesus, but the name was taken. He was her world. And he, as a mother, he was the kind of son women prayed for. You know, he is, when we were little, he was three years older than my sister, four years older than me, he took care of us like he was sixteen and we were five, when he was only nine. He'd cook breakfast every morning because my mother worked at night. So, she wasn't home when we were getting ready for school. I mean, we had pancakes and sausage when other kids had cold bowls of cereal. And he became, he loved trains, and he became a subway train driver. He married the wrong woman that took him into the wrong direction. My mother did raise us to be paranoid. And he, when he got sick and they put him into the hospital, and they told me the diagnosis was paranoia, I felt bad for my mother because you taught us to be paranoid. [She told us,] "Everybody wants to know our business, nobody really wants to be your friend." She used to tell me that particularly, "Nobody wants to be your friends. They just want to know my business." And she passed it on. And it took the worst effect on my brother. He was her all. So, I still think it's interesting that you can have a favorite, you know, when there's other children, but I'm glad that I didn't have anymore because I didn't want anyone distracting me from D, because I was already having my mental issues and I just didn't want any distractions. And, I didn't want anybody to be noticeably not as loved as he was. So, after, especially with dealing with my sister, I'm glad I don't have any other children, because even when I was pregnant the second time, I was wondering if it's going to be like my sister. Though, I have to say, I don't know anyone else in our family who is like my sister, so, it's not like there's a recessive gene or something.

R34: When you talk about your sister, it sounds like with all your sister did to you, you still love your sister.

I34: I do.

R35: But, it also sounds like there's a fear of your sister.

- I35: Don't know if there's a fear except for a fear of having to deal with her. And I do love her, she was my big sister and we were raised like twins. And I was my mother's little handmaiden I guess. Because, as an adult, I now know I was a people pleaser and anything my mother wanted I was going to do back flips to make it happen and show how well I can do it. But my sister's attitude was like, "Nan, make her do it." You know and my brother, I raised my younger brother, my mother gave him to me, and I'm like, you had kids I did not. But, I liked her mental toughness and she was funny, probably the funniest person on the planet. She could say some funny stuff out of nowhere, and people think I'm funny. And I'm like, "Oh no, you haven't heard her at work." She is hysterically funny. But, she is just a mean person. But, when other people would want to beat her up when we were kids, I was like, "Well, why can't you bet them up? Why are you following me? I mean, why do I have to go help you fight somebody when you so tough. You can beat me--go beat them," When we were outside and she was over there, and somebody would come and say, "Your sister's getting ready to have a fight over there." I'm like, "Over there?" They'd go, "Yeah." And I would go the other way. I'm like, she needs a good butt whipping, let them give it to her. I would definitely go the other way.
- R36: So, I'm curious to know how your relationship with your sister and the abuse has affected your relationships with other women and your male/female relationships.
- I36: That's funny because I have a billion friends. And not just like a lot of people I know. I have friends, real friends. And I've felt bad because, I was at my mother's funeral and afterwards my younger brother, ugh! All he knows about me is what my mother and sister say. You know, and they talked about me a lot behind my back. But then I use to tell my mother, "That's why God gave me a back, so you would have somewhere to talk about me." But my mother and sister would be, "Oh you think they're your friend, they're not your friends." But I think that they were my friends. And so, after my mother's funeral, this church was a huge church, just the main floor of the sanctuary is huge. And half of that sanctuary was [filled with] my friends and the other half was my mother's friends and my brother's and sister's friends. And my brother kept telling me, "They're not your friends, they're not your friends." And I said, "Why, because they didn't haze me?" (Because he's a Q.) So, they didn't haze me, so they can't be my friends? O he's a mason. And I'm like, "My friends have come through for me when my family would not." Now, my father would always come through for me, sometimes my mother was blocking it. You know, she was intentionally blocking it. And it was funny. My mother had my younger brother and my sister and there was me, my father and my older brother. And it's like those two were protecting me all along and these three were always attacking me. But, what was your question?
- R37: Your mother, your sister and your younger brother were...
- I37: My younger brother...

R38: Were attacking you? But your older brother and your father were protecting you?

I38: That's the way I see it now. My older brother was always protecting me. When we were kids and my sister would beat me up or just attack me for no reason and my brother would like take her off of me. But in the process of taking her off of me, he might hit her. So, my mother left strict orders that he was not to break up our fights and so he had to just stand there. And, sometimes he'd leave the room because he couldn't watch, but he was not allowed to break it up. And also, my sister was allowed to attack him too. I should put that in there. My mother use to tell him, "I don't care if she ties you up and stomps you on your face, you are not to hit her." And I'm like, that's just crazy. But, so, they protected me. I have so many--let me go back. I have wonderful friends. You know, I think about the quote about, the kindness of strangers. When we were coming up, I think we had the world's biggest tricycle. It was like a truck and all three of us could ride on this bike, that's how big it was. But it was for me and my sister. So, we'd go downstairs to play, my sister would ride the tricycle and would not let me get on, she would not let me get on. Neighbors, the other kids, adults would make her let me ride the bicycle. And they would tell her, they would hold her and make her get off the bicycle, so I could ride. So, when we would go back upstairs, she would tell my mother what happened and my mother would blame me. She was like, "That's your sister, you need to defend her." I'm like, how crazy does it look for me to fight the people who are protecting me from her, you know. And these are things I would tell people. I talk to my mother now more than I did when she was alive, I was like, "Why didn't you see that? Why did that make sense to you?" It seems crazy to me. People are protecting me from her and you want me to defend her against them. You know, and usually just to avoid being in trouble when I got upstairs, I would just walk away. Like if she's gonna ride the tricycle then just let her have the damn tricycle and I would just go upstairs. And my father would address them most of the time, but my mother was like oblivious to what was going on--what was really going on.

R39: I wonder if you...wonder how you could manage to feel safe or if you felt safe while you were growing up with all that was going on.

I39: I don't know. I was an interesting child. One time I got in trouble in school, third grade, and my teacher told my sister what happened and I don't know if she told my sister to tell my mother or whatever, but, we were leaving school and I didn't want to go home with her. I didn't want to walk with her, so I tried to get away from her. So, I don't know how long we were out there, but, by the end of the day, by the time we got home, my sister told my mother I was trying to run away from home. And, my sister makes a few things in her head, I don't know if it's intentional and she told my mother. And, my mother would believe whatever my sister said and she told my mother I was trying to run away from home, but I wasn't. And then later on they started to make fun of me. And they were singing that song by the Temptations, "Runaway child running wild." They just made fun of me (sobbing). I'm sorry (sobbing). But, we lived on the nineteenth floor in the

projects and when they left me alone, I climbed out the window and I wanted to jump. I was only eight. So, and the only reason I didn't let go is because I thought it was gorgeous, it was a beautiful scene out in New York that night. And, we lived on Madison Avenue and my father use to drive Madison Avenue to get home and I didn't want him to come home and see me on the ground. I don't know if I ever told him that. I didn't tell him. But, I just told him he saved my life so many times and he did. But, I wanted to jump. But, that's why I love kids, you don't know what these children are walking around with. I mean, who thinks of an eight year old climbing outside of a window of a nineteen story building? And to this day I know if I could've jumped and hurt just my mother and my sister, I would have. Because my mother's very big on what the neighbor's see and what they think, you know. I was like, "Live this down, baby." That was my attitude. Even today, what's like something for you to live down? That's why I love kids so much, in particular little girls. Because the crap these children go through. And my mother always had all this knowledge about people and how they feel and how they think. But like with me, she completely missed the mark.

R40: Tell me how that made you feel the way your mother treated you over the years.

I40: Horrible. Horrible. I think my retaliation was, whatever she said, I did the opposite.

R41: So you became rebellious?

I41: Yes.

R42: Against her?

I42: Definitely. Definitely. And, I think she was hardest on me because I looked and acted just like her. Just like her. And I couldn't figure it out. I idolized her more than anybody. You know, if I heard her say something I would try to emulate it. Like, she told somebody that her favorite color was red, my favorite color has been red ever since I heard her say that. I remember her telling her girlfriends how she always wanted a brass bed. When I got my own apartment I bought a brass bed. And I just loved her. She was funny and fun. She was beautiful and she just did not like me. I don't even think I realized that until I was like 28. I went home for Christmas and we got into it about something and when I came back a friend of mine picked me up from the airport and we were talking and he said, "Well, how was your trip to New York?" And I busted out crying. I was like, "My mother doesn't like me." But it's true. There's nothing she could say to make me believe otherwise.

R43: So, does the fact that if you look like your mother and act like your mother, does that mean your mother didn't like herself?

I43: I believe so, I believe she was taught to not like herself. She was born and raised, well, she was between Florida and the backwoods of Alabama. My grandmother was the ultimate negative woman. She was a strong woman, like a Madame CJ Walker in the making but, she had a lot of negativity. My grandmother was white except for her features, she was physically white. And I can only imagine what kind of mess she went through because of her appearance. And she passed that negativity onto my mother. And so, my mother saw herself in me, and then I was, “we” were a generation when women were able to see what they can do and live up to their own personal potential and my mother did not like that. I wanted to design my own line of clothes. I wanted to go to this school called Fashion High School because I’d been sewing since I was eleven. And, she didn’t want me to go to that high school. And when I was talking with my younger brother, when he was human, I was talking about a line of clothing I wanted to make with western clothing with African fabric and we were talking about it, because my younger brother is extremely intelligent, and we were there talking about it. And my mother walks up and tells me to stop trying to be something I’m not. And I was like, “Oh my God.” I was like, you know, you listen to poems and listen to music when women are singing about how their mothers taught them that the world is their oyster and you can go out and be whatever. Not my mother--she raised us to get married and to get out of her house, and that was pretty much it. It was funny because she would want you to get married by 18, but they wouldn’t let us date until 18, so where was this man gonna come from? So, that was her biggest disappointment in me that I was not going to get married and make her a slew of grandbabies. And the last negative thing she did, which was very painful. D’s father would come and go out of our lives every 3 to 4 years, and when he came back D was 15. And I went home to visit my mother because they had put her in a nursing home. And she knew that M was back and she told me to give D to M so that I could come home and take care of her. Yes. And I couldn’t believe she said that. I just looked at her like she spit me out. You know, and my retaliation against my mother was that if she did something I thought was wrong, would be to tell my sister, because my sister would attack her verbally. She’d let her have it. And she told her, “You’re the most god-awful woman” and I wanted her to hear that. Because I couldn’t believe you told me to give my son to this man who is basically a stranger so I can come home and take care of you. But my whole life she told me that I was gonna take care of her in her old age. And one time we went home to visit and she was in a nursing home and she asked D, “Why did you bring her here? Why didn’t you leave her in GA?” I’m like, what’s wrong with you with all this screaming in this nursing home? [She said,] “Why didn’t you take me to Georgia?” And I told her, “All these years you told me that I was gonna take care of you in your older age, why didn’t it occur to you to treat me better?” And she used to, I use to hate that she would give me this puppy dog look, but she deserved it that day. She told me this just as far back as I can remember, I was gonna take care of her in her old age, but you should’ve been a little bit nicer, you know. That’s all I could think was, you should’ve been nicer to me.

- R44: Tell me what keeps you in therapy? You said, “I’ve been in therapy” and I think you said, “a hundred years,” which I know you meant a long time.
- I44: Yes.
- R45: What is this, one continuous therapeutic relationship or several? Do you start and stop?
- I45: Well, I was starting and stopping because of economics. If I have a job and don’t have the insurance, then I don’t go. But then of course, I tell people that Cobb County offers free mental health. But don’t ask me how I know. But, I’m like get the help. I tell D get the help. If you feel like you need help, get the help. Don’t hide. And because he knows there is mental illness in the family. So, I’m like, get the help and I’m like depression comes and goes. You know, it comes and goes, and what keeps me going now is that I don’t want to leave D alone. So, I think I’ve told you, I’m on this quest to prove that my brother stole our estate. Because I want to give D something. I told him if I could rob a bank I would, just to get you the money to get a new car and get your life started. You know, he doesn’t have that boost. And what would have given him that boost, my brother just took it away. My sister doesn’t care because she’s got money, my older brother is gone, not gone, but you know, I don’t know where he is, but I’m still looking for him too. But, I’m, I honestly can say, “I wanna die sometimes.” It’s like, stop the pain. Stop the disappointment. But even now, I never imagined that at 55 my life would be so screwed up. I was the smart one, I was the talented one and it seems like all the stuff, negativity was building up, but I didn’t know. But like, when I was maybe 25, it all kicked in and I felt like I was standing on quicksand. But, this week’s thought is, no matter how bad it is, I’m in a homeless shelter, but who would have thought I would have found a program that would house me with no money, no money, no income. They take me. MUST ministries, their managers, their case managers may have issues, but, MUST ministries, as a program is a God-send. Who would have thought? I mean, they give me everything down to toilet paper. I mean, soap. I don’t have to go to store and spend a nickel. I just tell my case manager, “I need some toilet paper. I need soap.” You know, and they will even find extras, like a watch, and every now and then they do things like, you know, they find things for you that they think you might like and give it to you. And then there’s Good Samaritan. I go and get the prescriptions that cost \$420 at Walmart for a 90 day supply. I get it from Good Samaritan for \$76. You know, and then MUST Ministries found somebody to pay the \$76. You know, so in the midst of all this horribleness, God is still providing. And I hold on to that. What with all that I’ve got because that’s all that I’ve got. And D is a constant reminder that God loves me. I’ve got friends whose children have stolen their rent money, and just are in jail. Kids that use to pick on D for being a nerd...they treated him so badly. Kids at the Boys and Girls club, half of them are in jail, you know. And D doesn’t even think to do something wrong. It doesn’t cross his mind to do something wrong. But I know that sometimes the situations are



getting to him and I'm just praying for that and tracking down this money that my brother stole. I feel like I'm an investigator. It's like you call the police and say someone robbed my house and they tell you to find out who it is and bring him to them. That's what these agencies have got me doing. But, it keeps my mind off of what's horrible. It keeps my brain active. And it's kinda, I see it as a way of helping D, putting him where he needs to be. Because even in all this crap, he still managed to finish college. All of this crap, even the car accident, he managed to finish college. He's like a flag from God to say, "I'm still here and I know that you are there." And He [God] gave me D. Knowing his father, you know, the last few conversations we had, I just looked at him and said, "Well, I got the prize." He was like, there's no competition and I'm like yes, there is to me. And I have the prize. My son knows me, he loves me, and he respects me. He gave me a card for my birthday that said, "I my children think of me the way I think of you, I'd be happy," or something like that. And I just fell on the floor crying. I thought that was so beautiful. But the fact that I'm alive shows that there is a God, and He's strong, because He is strong when I am not.

- R46: Tell me what you think it is that keeps you from being able to move on.
- I46: I don't know. People say things like, "Let it go." I wish I could. I'm like, what does that mean? Even to myself I say, I'm gonna write a book called "Holding On With All I've Got", because there are times that I want to let go, but, what does letting go mean? What does it mean to let go? Does that mean to die? Does it mean to curl up in a ball and live in the back room of an institution somewhere? What does "that" let it go mean? What is letting go of--not holding on anymore? And like I told my friend the other day, I told him, I'm holding on to all I got, the rope is fraying in my hands and my fingers are burning, so, what comes next? But, usually at those points I think of D and I just go, "I gotta hold on for one more day or one more week." So, um, yeah. Am I depressing you?
- R47: No. It's just a lot to take in. I wonder about something. It sounds like it's exhausting for you to try to manage your life with all of the memories you have.
- I47: I know. If I could remove a part of my brain. I tell my friends if I could take a part of my brain and put it in a pot of water, the water would stew. Because it's just too much, it's too much.
- R48: But, at the same time you're able to have friendships, you've raised a son who is an outstanding young man. You have your own place, maybe not like you would want, but your needs are being supplied. You meet people, you develop relationships. But, it sounds like there in the back, the backstory, is that there is a circle that you keep coming back around to and it is your sister and how she treated you. [It also sounds like] not only that, but your mother didn't do anything about it. So, tell me when your mother didn't do anything about it, what message did that send you?

- I48: That she didn't care, she didn't care. Because it wasn't just my sister. My mother's father and her brother have tried to molest me. And um, one time, my sister has no memory but, she remembers reminding me of this. One time when we were having a party or something and her [my mother's] brother was trying to dance with me. But I was a child, he was a grown man, so getting together would not have been appropriate anyway. And my mother, he and my mother were having a tug-of-war over me. And, I had forgotten that time, but I couldn't believe she remembered that. But my mother, my mother's a fraidy cat, you know. Because my attitude was, tell daddy, because he would kill Uncle B. (I think everybody has an Uncle B.) But my mother didn't want my father to kill B because then she wouldn't have no helper and she won't have no brother, my father would be in jail. But, I just, I didn't trust her, I didn't have any faith in her. I tell people that the number one job of a mother is to protect their children, and if you're not protecting your children, you're not a mother. And her father would abuse them. My grandfather was an alcoholic also and he'd come to church drunk, pissy drunk talking to all his spirits and everything. And one time I was in church and he's trying to get a flick, like a dust off my breasts and I was like, I'm going to break your arm off if you touch me. At that point I was an adult. But stuff like that, why didn't you protect us from that? Why didn't you, and I could always find, I don't know, if it's an excuse or a simple reason why people allow things to happen the way they do, but it still doesn't undo the damage. My mother, I can only imagine what my grandfather did to her when she was coming up. And I believe, like from the bible, when you get married, the wedding vows you say, you know, "Keep yourself only to this person." My mother's family should have gone away or taken a step back or she should have held them at bay, but she didn't. They were always there. My father was an orphan. And only he and his older sister moved to New York, so he didn't have his family around. But, my mother's brother, she had two brothers, they had their women, [and] my grandparents, they were always around. I'm like, "Take your asses home." My grandmother lived walking distance. I tell people you should either live with your grandmother or far away. With her being right up the street was not a good thing. And it's like the entertainment for us was for them to upset my father so he could put them out, because he would put them out in a heartbeat. He was a very soft-spoken person so it could be a party and everybody's talking, and the music is playing, but you will hear that voice say, "Get out." Like, no matter how soft he'd say it, "get out." And she should've put them aside. This is your family, your children your husband. Your brothers, their women, and your parents should not be around. You know, they should just not be around, and that I feel was too much weight on her and I think she was a strong woman and I learned to not hate her, that's the only good thing out of her. The best part about parenting is that it taught me that. She just had too much on her.
- R49: I'm wondering at this point in your life, I think you said earlier you're 55, you've been in therapy for many years. You said before we started talking that you've been depressed lately, that you've been crying a lot lately. I wonder at this point in your life, what is your hope for you?

- I49: Well, despite all the crazy, I always felt like God had something special for me to do, something special. And not necessarily it would be a task, but, like maybe to become an entertainer. I love to make people laugh and I make myself laugh sometimes. And one day I thought that maybe that's one thing I am to do was D. Not to put weight on him, but, maybe that's my great thing. But, I still haven't given up on the stand-up comedy for my birthday, which is on the 26<sup>th</sup>. I want to go to open mic night at a comedy club, because even in the worse situations, at the worst times, I find myself laughing. And I get a lot of value in that other people find me interesting. Well, people tell me they think I'm smart. I want to fall off my chair. I'm like, "Who are they talking to?" Or the fact that in the worst situations, I can find the humor, and I think that's a gift from God. Because even with my family, in the worst times we end up laughing at something. And, so, maybe my job, I still don't know for sure, but, maybe my job is to make other people laugh, make the world entertaining. I know that if I go into comedy, I don't plan to. I don't know. You can't become an overnight success, but if I could just make enough to support myself. And I have such wonderful friends, in some of the greatest situations, I couldn't begin to pay them back financially. But, if I could pay them back, if I won the lottery, I would take my friends on a cruise. You know, take my friends on a cruise. I have a couple of friends I would pay off their houses. That's what I get pleasure doing, you know, like if I win the lottery I'd make a list of what I would do--what I get pleasure from. But, I think that I owe it to my friends and my loved ones to do better before I die. You know, that's my sentence most days, you know, my before I die bucket list. And I want to make a success of myself so people can say that they're proud to know me, and that, I don't know if it's bad, but I put a lot of my self-worth, like, if I don't feel self-value, I use my friends to tell me I'm valued. Because God gave me some wonderful friends. And then, D's friend took me to Jasper this morning, for this blood work and he dropped me off here. D has a wonderful friend too, which I think is wonderful. And I was talking to him about D. And D's friends like him for the same reason my friends like me. He's funny, he's intelligent and he makes them feel good. So, even at my worst, somebody will call me and say, "I didn't feel like getting up this morning or I didn't feel like doing blah, blah, blah, but you made me laugh when I didn't think I could." So, I think I have a lot of value in that, and that's what I hold on to. My prayer or my constant prayer is to help me turn my life around and leave a mark, you know, to some people or on society.
- R50: So, what would that look like? It's interesting you would say that because I was thinking as you were talking, the last time we talked, we talked about some stories from the Bible. And we talked about our own stories and how we'd like for them to end. So, I wonder, what legacy do you want to leave? How would you rewrite this story? What would the story be?
- I50: Rewrite my story?
- R51: Yes.

- I51: Well, I'm very observant and I noticed people, like relatives, who have a certain kind of life, but near the end, or before...well, I don't know what the end would be, but at a certain point, it turned around. And like, my mother was very depressed the whole time we were growing up. After she had my brother she didn't go back to work because they were phasing out LPNs, but for 10 years she didn't do anything but lay on the couch and cook dinner. And right when I was getting ready to graduate from high school, she went back to work. She found a job. Somebody hired her. And she had the responsibilities of an RN because she was a very good nurse and had that kind of training, but, so they let her around some of the laws, like, the LPNs weren't supposed to administer some of the medications and injections, so they let her do all of that and her life turned around. I had another aunt who wasn't working or working in retail, not making any money, but then she ended up going to the Postal Service, and then she became a supervisor and the director. So, I'm like, well Lord, let me see what might my turn be. I believe that there is going to be a turnaround. And I just pray to be able to hold on until it gets here. And I still don't know what it is going to be. When I got out of high school, I didn't know what I was gonna be, and I still don't know. But, I'm just praying for that turnaround, just help me to hold out for the turnaround. And I'm paying attention, I'm keeping my eyes open. I'm looking in every direction so that I'm not missing what God does. I don't know, there is a movie called, "The Life of Brian." Did you ever see that? My favorite. Rev. CW preached a sermon, and I think we had a shared brain.
- R52: He did preach a sermon about that. I do remember.
- I52: Brian showed up, and I don't know the name of the mountain, but behind Moses, when Moses goes down Brian comes up, he sees a bush smoking and he stomps out the fire. And he walks up after they turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, he scrapes salt off of her onto his food. But I'm always a day late and a dollar short. But I believe I'm going to show up on time, with the right amount of money or whatever it takes for me to do what I'm going to do. So, I'm keeping my eyes open.
- R53: Is there any type of dream, vision, or longing for what that would look like?
- I53: No. Even as a child when my sister was playing Barbie, I would play office. I was always an office person, a manager, doing something. But, I never figured out how I got there or what I would do. Like, when we got our little allowance, she would go buy clothes for Barbie, I'd buy a little stapler set and pad and pencil. It was so funny. One year we went school shopping. She bought a little book bag, backpack or something. I bought a brief case. (Laughs). So, I don't know what it's gonna look like. I had an office job when D was a baby. I was having trouble with childcare and work and blah, blah, blah. So, I came up with a business plan to open a 24-7 day care center. Take children from six weeks to 18 years old. And then at 18, there was going to be a junior achievement program, I

wrote a whole business plan. There's a big binder I have in storage that says, Golden Child. And [it was named] Golden Child because of D, but this daycare center was gonna grow into this whole big entity. And I wrote a business plan and it's still sitting there. And I took care of every mother's need. You know, when you talk about Christmas time and the children, etc. I'm usually sitting there going, "mothers, what about the mother?" You know, "a happy mother makes for a happy home." Take care of the mother, but nobody looks at the mother. At least not in Georgia. They look at the children. And I'm like, "No, you gotta motivate the mother." And in my head, there is still this daycare center, that's open 24-7. There was going to be one in Harlem and one in Georgia. So, that's all.

R54: So, what's keeping you from moving forward with that?

I54: Well, now I don't know because every time there is something else. When I had Golden Child I needed money to support myself. When I went to massage therapy school then there was Golden Hands, then there was Golden Arms. Golden Arms is a home I want to open for foster girls to keep girls. And I broke down all these things because I had to keep putting them aside. I have to keep making money and getting a job, then I get the job then all the bills are still behind, so I gotta catch up on all the bills, so, I ended up losing my home, then I ended up losing my job and it was just like this big wheel. But now, it hit me a few months ago, I don't have to worry about getting a job and keeping a roof over my head, so, why am I not working on what I call, "God's plan" in my life? So, I went on a fast and no TV, no social media, I think I told you about that. I gave up all of these things so I could focus on it, but then I lost the focus. And I think I took too much time to do what I was supposed to do and then that was when the stroke came. So now there's a memory issue. So I don't want to feed into the crutch of having had a stroke, but it's not...I don't know where I am now.

R55: You said you had all these things and you were about to do all these things and then...

I55: Well, life kept getting in the way and I had to keep a roof over our head, keeping food coming in, keeping the car running. I didn't start driving till I was 32. And then it became the fact of trying to keep a car, keep a roof, and keep D fed and it felt like I'm juggling, but I keep dropping the ball, you know. So, there are days when I feel hopeless, days when I feel encouraged. But, I try to keep the encouragement coming in.

R56: Tell me how this has been for you today--to talk about and just be able to verbalize what you've been through to someone.

I56: It feels good because I think I've talked about all the pieces, but this is the first time I think I talked about the whole thing. And I can't tell you how much it pleases me to have this conversation with you because I really do love you, Pastor

Dobbs. I am so sorry that you left. Not anything against [the new pastor], he is really on the ball and I know he has jumped into a pit of fire. Because St. Paul is a circus. (Laughs). We did this workshop with him--I forgot what it was called. "What's a plus or, I think the worst of something we did?" And people were talking about what they did...I ended up with Z and B, once we divided up, so I was with those two. Things that people, things they said, like I could hear other groups talking too. Like, C was saying, "There's no communication problem at St. Paul." There's a communication problem at St. Paul. People can't even return phone calls, and that's one problem. And B and S were talking about the family, and how it's family, but it's kind of cultish. Yeah [it's] cultish, because I feel like I'm on the outside looking in. The highlight of being at St. Paul, especially now that you are gone is the W Family. Mother W makes me feel like I have a home. Especially like I have a new mother. Like she cared more than even my mother cared. And she already had five girls and she made room in her heart, in her life for one more. You know, so, sometimes I wanna scream and run out the door. And some Sundays it's actually hard to go, But, I ask God to help let me see what's me. Because like I can't stand Z. This woman talks so much. We were waiting to eat and she's talking about G's rectal exam. And I'm like, "Oh my God!" Like we're getting ready to eat. God bless her, but you know. But, just being able to talk about it with you and get it out of my system. And this is one thing I gotta tell you before I forget. Women don't change doctors like men. Men, they don't even go to the doctor half the time. And having you move, it's like someone said, "This is your new GYN." So, I hope you don't mind if I do keep up with you. And I have a list of people I want to refer to you for counseling or just to know you. But, having talked about it now feels. Dr. K use to laugh. [It's like] an "emotional enema" (Laughs). That's my phrase. I told him I dated a guy who was emotionally constipated and talking to him [Dr. K] was like an emotional enema. It's ugly and it's nasty, but you get it out. So, I'm glad I had the chance to get it out. So, hopefully you will be able to use what I say.

R57: Definitely.

## APPENDIX BB

### INTERVIEW #3

**Legend:**                      **R = Researcher**                      **I = Interviewee**

- R1: Tell me about one of your experiences with violence.
- I1: It was my second grade year because they integrated school second grade year in North Canton Elementary school. Some of the white students did not want us to stay there and they were extremely mean. So, that first year I did not want to go to school because of that. Because I was scared. This day some of the whites were calling us niggers and hitting and spitting on us. Other kids were nice and they would sit beside us and talk to us and try to get us to be calm.
- R2: That must have been very traumatic. Is that the first time you'd ever experienced something like that?
- I2: Yes, as a child. That was really the first thing because otherwise we played with everybody. But, when it came to integrating, because I went to Ralph Bunch my first grade year. And my second grade year they integrated schools. And then we went to NC.
- R3: So, tell me how you felt.
- I3: I felt scared and isolated, you know. Because there was, I guess, maybe 2 or 3 others. They had 3 classrooms for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and it was only maybe a couple of black kids in there. And, a lot of times I wound up being the only black child in class, so it was kind of scary and I felt like I didn't want to go, because I didn't want to be in that classroom by myself.
- R4: So, tell me who you told about it.
- I4: Well, my parents and then Mr. T. He was the principal there, LT. And he told us he was not having that type of environment and he did all he could and he did it. By the end of the school year everything was pretty much running smoothly. Because he made sure that none of the black students who were bused in were ever hurt after then.
- R5: So it sounds like the full integration of the schools had not occurred; but, that some of you were going to a predominately white school.

- I5: Well, that was the first year of the full integration. Because up until that year, we were all going to all the black school. Some went to Canton Elementary and we went to NC. So, the school split.
- R6: That must have been frightening for a second grader?
- I6: Yes, it was. Especially when you didn't know what to expect. You're used to being with your friends and then you're with everybody.
- R7: So, you're in a different school. It's a racially tense situation, the principal is trying to do all he can do, but you still felt afraid.
- I7: Right.
- R8: Tell me how that situation has affected you in going forward. Has that had an impact on your life at all, that experience?
- I8: Well, it mainly made you less trusting of people and as I got older I still wound up, because I took a lot of College Prep classes, and I was in the band. I was the only black in the band, the actual marching band we had blacks on the flag core, but for a while I was only black person in the band, until some of the younger people came. So, I was used to it by the time I got to high school, being the only black in a lot of different things.
- R9: And, so, has that situation carried over into how you interact with people as an adult?
- I9: Yes, it does. It's easier for me to interact and to look at people as people and not the colors. And on the other hand a lot of whites, they treated me better than some of the black kids did as we got older because they were saying we thought we were better than they were. But some of the black kids picked on us more as we grew older.
- R10: So, it sounds like that was the first experience of violence that you remember.
- I10: Yes.
- R11: Have there been any other experiences [of violence] throughout your life?
- I11: Yes. I would say when I worked at the post office. It was mainly older people who would come in and then there were some younger who didn't want me to wait on them because I was black. But, because I was the assistant supervisor for the window, they still wound up having to come to me anyway. We'd have people spitting and throwing things.



R12: Did they spit on you?

I12: They tried to, but I moved out of the way and then the supervisor would come up and other co-workers would say, "No, we're not having that in here." And they would call the law and have them put out because they didn't want somebody black to wait on them.

R13: My goodness. What post office was this?

I13: When I worked at the R post office.

R14: Really? Wow! And so, they threw things also?

I14: Yes, they would throw paper, whatever. And stand there and say, "Well, I'm not going to let you wait on me." And they wouldn't take the money. They didn't want my hand to touch the money from me. Or they would throw their money on the counter because they didn't want to touch my hand.

R15: Tell me how you dealt with that. And, tell me how you felt when that was happening.

I15: Sometimes it would make me so mad I would be ready to cry. And, I've learned to pray about it and to continue to. A lot of times I internalized the stress and so I wound up with stomach ulcers. Then, I also had to look. I started looking at the people. Most were older people and then, you know, I think about the era in which they grew up. But, you know, at the time it makes you feel like you're less than a person when people are talking to you like that.

R16: Was there anybody around you that was either not a part of that situation or outside the post office that you could talk to about what was happening?

I16: Yes. I talked to my co-workers because they would say, "No, we're not gonna stay." I was talking to one lady and she would say, "No, that's not called for." And they didn't like her because she was from up north. And they told her she thought she was uppity because she was from up north. And she was a white lady, but, they still said that to her. She would say, "I just don't get it. I don't get these people down here."

R17: It's hard for me to imagine that. R seems to be so progressive now, in terms of and as a part of that county. It's hard for me to imagine that happening in R. I thought you were gonna say somewhere out in E or something like that?

- I17: Back in the '80s when I started they didn't have very many black people. Sister A was there cleaning and there was maybe one other black person that would come in. Sis. B, A's sister, she worked once as a carrier. She worked in the post office for a little while when she was home from college, but I was the first person actually to be hired full time then and after then at the time. I remember one time I was out hanging the flag and this man says, "Hey girl, are you supposed to be out here hanging that flag? Do you know what you're doing?" And he even called the postmaster and told him he thought I was stealing the flag. And he said, "No, she is not stealing the flag." And he kind of laughed it off and said, "But, that wasn't funny to you, was it?" and I said, "No, that wasn't funny. I know that was one of your friends, but that was offensive." And he apologized. And, so, when the man came in the next time he apologized. He said, "If I offended you, I was just kind of joking." That's not a joke.
- R18: So, it sounds like the experiences of violence that has had the most impact on you has been racially motivated.
- I18: Right.
- R19: Have there been any other experiences?
- I19: Not that actually happened to me. But, back when the missing and murdered children of Atlanta, that was a time where I was kinda scared because they couldn't figure out who was doing all of the killing and they were saying it was the KKK that was killing everybody. And so, that was my freshman year in college and that was kinda scary being away from home and thinking that somebody was out there killing people.
- R20: I'm wondering how, when there's been a lot racial tension it seems like, all over the nation lately. And I wonder if any of those recent experiences, if you hear them on the news, see them on the news, I wonder if that has affected you in any way or if it has brought up the remembrances of some of those things you just talked about.
- I20: It did. It really made me remember some of the things that happened and think about, well you know, that we went through some of that. I can remember--I don't remember the stories as clearly as my sisters. But when we were younger and the KKK was riding through Pea Ridge and down School Road and they were gonna ride, come through, and shoot up everything. And the men in the community got together and they were waiting on them to come. And some white man got shot, because he was shooting at them. They were down there where the tire shop is, it used to be a service station there. They were sitting there waiting for them to

come on through there because they had told them don't come up through there with that, because they weren't gonna have it.

R21: How did you feel when that was going on?

I21: It was scary because I was worried that some of the men would get killed over something, something so crazy like that. At that time I didn't understand why people, they just didn't like each other. Because we had played with the kids out at W, you know. We didn't realize until then. We played with all the kids and we didn't see nothing wrong with it. But it was scary because they use to tell us to make sure that we walked to school. At that time it was around 1980 and they would tell us to walk to school down to Ralph Bunch, because there wasn't a bus to take us all the way down.

R22: Wow! Wow! When you say 1980, ...would that be in the 70s?

I22: Well, that was in the 70s when they were gonna ride through Pea Ridge.

R23: That doesn't seem that long ago. I know it's been 40 plus years, but that wasn't that long ago when you think about the grand scheme of things.

I23: Right.

R24: So, how has that impacted you in terms of being in situations where you are in the minority?

I24: I'll just be more alert of what's going on around me because a lot of times I am in the minority. Because when I was in school, I was in the pre-med program and there were not many black students in that program and so a lot of times, a lot of them were in different majors so I had a lot of classes by myself.

R25: I wanna go back to something you said earlier. When you told your supervisor about what happened when you were out there raising the flag, and his reaction. I'm unclear-- did you tell him or did his friend tell him?

I25: I did. I told him and he kind of laughed and said, "Oh, he was just joking." I said, "But that wasn't no joke." And he asked, "So, that offended you?" and I said, "Yes." The next time the man came in he apologized and stated that he was joking and didn't really think I was stealing the flag. He said, "Not too many times do you see somebody black raising the flag or lowering the flag." Because at that time they didn't have no full-time employees there. Other than Sister A and that others were janitors.

- R26: And that's kinda racist in itself to say, "I haven't seen too many black people raising the flag," as if a black person can't raise the flag.
- I26: Right.
- R27: So, tell me about your emotions. You said you were scared. Were there any other emotions with the school incident, with some of the customers in the post office? Were there other emotions?
- I27: It made me angry. Made me cry. Sometimes I would go to the bathroom and cry, I would be so mad I would cry. And you know, you just don't know how to really deal with that. And then I started thinking about it, you can't take it out on everybody. Because everybody doesn't believe the same way.
- R28: So, that happened some years ago?
- I28: Right.
- R29: Would you say you've gotten over the effects on you or is it still with you?
- I29: Pretty much over it, but if certain things happen, I can remember certain things about it and I can tell them, "Hey, I've been through this and that and you can get through that."
- R30: When you were going through that situation as a child, when the schools integrated at NC, is there something you wished would have happened that would have helped you more and would have been more helpful and healing to you?
- I30: I don't know. Maybe if they had tried to explain to us what was happening. Maybe they tried to explain to us what was gonna happen when we went to school. So we could be prepared for that. I'm sure our parents probably told us, but at that age we didn't comprehend exactly all that was gonna happen.
- R31: That's a lot for a child to comprehend, because children usually don't see like that unless they've been taught that.
- I31: Right.
- R32: And what about at the post office? If you could go back to that moment or those times you spent there and you were experiencing, it seems like it was more verbal than anything, except the throwing of packages, throwing things at you and trying to spit on you, that was going to physical. But, is there anything you wished had

been done or could have been done, that could have been more healing to you and made you feel more secure in that environment?

- I32: Maybe if the postmaster then, maybe had he been more receptive. He always said we could come to him and tell him anything, but when we tried to go to tell him something, he didn't want to hear it. He didn't want to hear it, but the supervisors were behind us and they would stay with us and talk to us. Then he would say, "Oh well, I didn't think it was that serious." But, the supervisors did. They would back us.
- R33: So, it's almost sort of like you were unheard? Especially when you went to him. But, you did have people you could go to.
- I33: Right.
- R34: Wow! That's amazing. You talked about internalizing your feelings and the digestive problems that you developed. Can you say more about that?
- I34: I didn't want to burden anybody so I would, the stress from it, just keep it bottled up. Keeping everything in, it caused me to get sick. I got sick from the stress of the job. It was a stressful job supervising everyone on the window, even though I had a supervisor, I wound up doing most of his work. He would be walking around drinking coffee so, finally, me and one of the other ladies were talking and she said, "We just gone have to sit down and tell him, he's going to have to help do some of this work. He is getting paid to do it, but we are doing the work." So, because when I went to the doctor he said a lot of it is stress related and he said if you keep everything bottled up inside of you all the time, it has that affect and I was taking pain medications because I always had a headache. So, I'm taking Advil and didn't realize the Advil was eating the lining of my stomach. I'd be so tired and have migraines by the time I got home.
- R35: So, tell me how you deal with your stress now. Do you still keep things bottled up?
- I35: No. I've learned to release it and I talk. I even started keeping a journal and writing things down, because even if you don't mail the letter to somebody, just write it down and get it out. Because the more you hold in, the worse you're going to be. I finally learned to do that, even just writing the prayers down, anything to help—walking. We started walking regularly.
- R36: Very good. Very good. So, it sounds like, especially the experience at the post office, was a major factor in the chronic illness that you have.

- I36: It added to it. He said that I probably had had it, but it was dormant until the stress of everything. After that I decided, That was about the time I decided I was gonna start eating healthier and everything. So, I started eating salads and did not know that what it was I had. And all of that together brought the ulcers, the colitis to the forefront.
- R37: So, tell me about any other experiences of violence that have happened in adulthood. Maybe outside of school, outside of the workplace. Have there been any within the family, within the community?
- I37: My sister, S, went through a lot of violence. I found out that she had been beaten by drug dealers a couple of times. And one of her former boyfriends, some kind of way, they got him word that she was at Grady's and he called us after she had been there about a month or two. But, we hadn't heard anything from her. But, he didn't call us either because he said he didn't want us to see her in that state.
- R38: That was before she passed?
- I38: Well, it was a number of years before but it happened a couple of times and nobody had heard from her and she would go off and we wouldn't hear from her for months. And so, finally he called after she got well and we could see it, and I wondered what was going on because I knew that she was dealing and doing drugs. She kept telling us she was gone smoke until she died. And she wasn't going to stop doing them, and I said, "Ok, well, I guess she got her wish."
- R39: So, it was her boyfriend that beat her up that called you guys?
- I39: No, it was some drug dealer that beat her up. And it was her former boyfriend that called. Grady had found his name on some paperwork that they had and he went down to see about her and he finally called to tell us where she was.
- R40: Tell me about your feelings when you heard about that and when you saw your sister.
- I40: I couldn't understand why she kept doing that. Why would she keep doing drugs, when she knew it was tearing her life apart. It would make me angry because I couldn't understand and she kept putting mama and daddy through that--not knowing if she was alive, whether she was dead. She was stealing from the family. One summer I worked at the chicken plant to raise money to go back to school, I didn't realize she had gotten into my checking account. She had stolen from me and taken all of my money out of my checking account. And, when I went to get money out to buy clothes for school, I didn't have anything, because she had used it all.

R41: Tell me how you felt when that happened to you.

I41: I was so angry. I told her had she been there I probably would have beaten her up. She always was like, she didn't do it, she didn't do it. But they told me, there was a woman that came in there. When I saw the handwriting on the check I knew it was her, because I knew how she wrote. But, I knew that I couldn't hold that forever. And they would say, "I don't know why you keep trusting her." But, I'm like, no, that's my sister and I know everything she does is not right, but she is my sister and I have to love her. S makes me angry with stuff she does, but, you know, you have to forgive and move on.

R42: Sounds like you're a very loving and forgiving person. I wonder how has that helped you or hurt you in terms of dealing with things that have been done to you wrongly. Has it helped you or hurt you? And how?

I42: Some people say it hurt, because they would say, "You should have had her put in jail." And maybe had we done that, she wouldn't have gotten to the other state. I don't know.

R43: Do you believe that's true?

I43: No. I don't know whether that would have made a difference or not. Because I mean she went to prison, she stayed there for 3 years and whatever, but she still came out and did the same thing, so I'm wondering if it would have made a difference had she gone back or not. But she had told us one time that she would kill herself if she went back. You know, I think, I didn't want that hanging over me, saying she killed herself while she was in there.

R44: That's a tough place to be in. To be treated wrongly, to be the subject of abuse in any type of way, but to have [the perpetrator] be a family member. I guess for the sake of the family and the relationship, to just continue and not do anything. Tell me about that.

I44: She wouldn't come around for a while and she always acted like everything was fine, like she's never done anything. And then she would be sitting around (saying), "Well, I don't know why everybody treating me so different. Why they won't let the nieces and nephews come stay with me. I'm not gone have them the same." I'm like, you've got to realize some of the things you've done. They remember what you've done to them. I'd say and you want everybody to just forgive it and it's not that easy to do. She knows and I mean, we've talked about it and she's asked for forgiveness but, you know, she'd turn around and do some of the same things over and over again. And, it was almost like she made you feel

like it was your fault that she did it. And she would be like, “Well, I had the brain tumor” and we were like, “Yes, you had the brain tumor< but you can’t blame that for everything bad that you’ve ever done in your life. You have to take responsibility for stuff.” It was almost like she never really wanted to take responsibility for her stuff or her part.

R45: Tell me how that’s been to resolve now that she’s gone.

I45: To resolve, I guess finally, it was almost like a burden lifted because you don’t have to worry about her and whether she’s alright and what she’s doing. And you don’t have to put your purse up or do this or make sure there’s nothing laying around when she comes so she can’t get any number and you don’t have to be uncomfortable in your own house. And you think you shouldn’t have to live this way with your family.

R46: How did the things that she did affect your family?

I46: It really affected a lot of things. People were angry and didn’t want to invite her to things because they were still distrustful and remembered things that she had done to us earlier. Because remember, she had just about stolen everybody’s identity and used their social security numbers to get credit cards and everything else. And she’d swear up and down that she didn’t do it, but we knew she did it because we would look at the signature and everybody knew her signature because she had a distinct signature. And then when you’d try to say something to her about it, she would get mad at us and say we just didn’t love her and we wanted to treat her differently.

R47: Did anyone in the family ever press charges?

I47: I think A did once because she found out she had gotten 15 different credit cards in her name at one time or another and she told me, “I’ve never had a credit card.” And she said, “Oh yeah, you’ve had 15.” And she said, “No I didn’t.” And I think that this last time, about 2 years ago, when we went to the family reunion in PA Daddy did, well, actually he didn’t. The state pressed charges against her where she had stolen his guns and pawned them. They pressed the charges because he was gone drop them and they told him he couldn’t drop them. And so she was angry at him because he didn’t drop the charges. But he told her, “I don’t have anything to do with the charges. It’s out of my hands.” And she said, so, “Your property means more to you than I do.” And he said, “That doesn’t have anything to do with it.”

R48: How has that affected other relationships with friends, with neighbors, with anyone else, other than the family members?



- I48: It makes everybody be extra careful and leery. You just don't want to let anybody in your house no more. Then you want to have people come and stay with you and you have to worry about what they might be thinking or what's going on in their minds. And you don't want to feel that way, but then you have to be cautious.
- R49: There's different kinds of violence and that wasn't physical. But that was emotional. And then economic to affect someone's finances and then also emotional to turn it around as if they're the guilty party. So, you and your family have been through a lot with that it sounds like.
- I49: Yes, we've been through a lot. She started when she was in high school and so, yes there has been. Just about all her life, she has been doing and taking stuff that wasn't hers and when I think about that mama and daddy could be really travelling and doing things that they wanted to do. But they can't do it because daddy spent half of his pension, took it out and first they were paying things off to keep her from going to jail. And then when she went, they bailed her out 2 or 3 times. And finally, this last time, he was like, "No, I'm just gone let her stay. Because she's got to learn. Maybe if we hadn't bailed her out some of the other times then she would have learned something."
- R50: It must be painful for you and the rest of your family to know how hard your parents worked and the sacrifices that they made and that their retirement is different than they had planned for it to be.
- I50: It is and you want to do all you can do because you know. Because they had just mortgaged their house again when V died. She didn't have insurance to pay for her burial and knowing that they're still having to pay a mortgage when their house has been paid off 3 times. And they made decisions to help my sisters, but with V, B couldn't afford to do anything, like get life insurance, because of her sickness.
- R51: So, it's like the affects continue even after the act is done. It's kind of like a domino effect and it's not just over. But it just continues to affect your life and the lives of those you love.
- I51: It does.
- R52: Looking back on the situation with when your money was stolen, that you had worked and saved that summer, looking back on the many times your parents bailed your sister out, the different things she did with the family, if you could go back and change any of that, what would it be?

- I52: A lot of it they didn't tell me and V because we were younger. So, since she was 5 years older than me, a lot of times I didn't know. And then when I went to college a lot of stuff they didn't tell me what was going on. I found out later on. So, a lot of times we didn't know exactly what was going on, we found out later what she had done, and what they had done.
- R53: It's like it was a catch twenty-two. When someone, a close relative, a sibling, or other close relatives, when they perpetrate some type of violence against you, it seems like it's a catch twenty-two because you love the person and you want to reconcile it and you want to keep the relationship. How do you navigate that? How do you do that?
- I53: Just pray that God will give you the wisdom to tell you what do in that situation and you know, and he [God] was saying, "You still have to be loving and forgiving." And so, you know, it would be sometimes just out the blue, she would give us things and just come up and say, "I wanna take you to dinner. I've got a little extra money so we could go to dinner." And you know, it was like, she was trying to make up for the things she had done. But, it's hard.
- R54: It is hard. And then with the faith—Christianity--that there might be some things that would happen in that relationship. But because you're Christian and trying to live by Christian principles, there are whole lot of actions that don't seem available to us.
- I54: Right. Well, I ask myself what would Jesus do? Would he have us to do some of the things that you want to do, like if S did that to him, is that what he would say, "I will just beat the daylights out of you." And you know you can't go around beating folks up and you'd wind up in jail your own self. (Laughs).
- R55: A would have been the one to do it.
- I55: Yep. (Laughs) She would have.
- R56: So, have you ever shared some of what you shared today outside your family today?
- I56: Yes.
- R57: What was the reaction when you shared?
- I57: It was my college roommate and she had a big family also so she knew. She had a brother, and some were on drugs. She basically had been going through some of the same things as I had. I had talked to her not long ago and she was telling me that she and her sister are raising their brother's kids and she was telling me that one of them, B, he's maybe a year older than R. And she was telling me when she was going through the same thing. He had gone to prison because he had

actually tried to rob someone. She said, when he grew up he had everything. [She said,] “We did everything we could for him. He didn’t want for anything, but I just don’t understand some time why he chose to go the other way.”

R58: That can be disheartening, can’t it?

I58: It can be so heartbreaking. Yes, she said that she had been dealing with some of the same things in her family also. And she said her sister was strung out on drugs and had kids, and she got killed and they were raising her kids. She’s raised her nieces and nephews, so she knew some of what it felt like.

R59: I guess that’s why you guys got to be so close--sharing those kinds of experiences from your lives. So, what could the church possibly have done to bring about healing to you and your family in what you were going through?

I59: I know a lot of them prayed with us because some of them knew about the stuff that was going on. I was talking to B earlier and she was talking about doing an intervention and for D’s wife and T. And she said they need to go to rehab. I said that only works if they want to go. You can’t send them. And you know people suggest that you go to rehab, but you can’t send them unless they really want to go. I don’t know. If that person doesn’t feel like they have a problem, then it’s not gone work. So, I’m not sure exactly. You know, I think they did what they thought they were doing for the best.

R60: Did the church do anything that was not helpful?

I60: Not that I can remember.

R61: You shared three different experiences, one, when you went to the school and you were in the minority; two, when you worked at the posted office and you were in the minority; and three, it’s kind of like a long term situation with your sister, who sounds like she had a drug problem, and that was the root of the problem. It’s sort of like three different phases of your life...child, young adult and young adult forward.

I61: Right.

R62: So, at any of those points—and we’ve talked about the one with your sister. Is there anything the church could have done to help you as a child deal with the racial violence that you were dealing with as a 7 year old?

I62: Well, they did. We had [a church member] who worked in the kitchen and MM and they were there. They would say you know they would come and make sure

that we were alright. And they did sit down and talk to the kids to tell us how to respond to people and not let them go. And they would pray and tell us not to listen to those calling us ugly and apes and monkeys. They would say, “No, don’t you listen to that.”

R63: As a young adult working in the post office? Anything the church could have done?

I63: Well, sometime people would come in and tell me to keep my head up and don’t let those people get you down. Don’t stoop to their level and to be the bigger person. And if I needed to talk that they were there to talk.

R64: So, the church was supportive and encouraging?

I64: Right.

R65: And the people that you mentioned, they weren’t so much a part of your own church as much as they were a part of the community?

I65: Right. They were a part of the community.

R66: Awesome! Awesome! Awesome! Anything else you want to share?

I66: No.

R67: Tell me how sharing this in this forum has been for you. What has it been like?

I67: It feels free and releasing. Remembering sometimes is good, like I said, keeping things bottled up is not good. And sometimes me and A will be talking on the phone and she will say how she was just having one of those days and she was thinking about our sister. How she was saying how she was just having one of those days. It sounds crazy because folks say after all, ya’ll fussed and fought. But still you just have those days. It helps you get free of some things that you may not realize you’re still holding it in.

## APPENDIX CC

### INTERVIEW #4

**Legend:**

**R = Researcher**

**I = Interviewee**

- R1: Tell me about one of the most impactful experiences of violence that has taken place in your life.
- I1: Well, Pastor, when you say violence, do you mean like, physical harm?
- R2: It doesn't have to be physical. It could be verbal. It could be emotional or psychological. And it could be against you or someone else. Whatever has impacted you the most, whether it was against you personally or it could be indirect. It could be against someone that you know that, because of their experience, it might have affected you.
- I2: So, ok, now that you say that, I was with my, it's been years ago, I was a little girl. I guess I had to be between 5 and 7. And, I was with my dad and he was with his brother and we stopped at this repair place, and something, but, anyway they were talking and we were all standing there and the next thing I know, my uncle had this man up by his collar with his knife out. And my daddy is yelling, "T, go outside! Go outside!", while he's trying to get my uncle off this man. So, I think that's my first thing like that, because, like, it went from 0 to like, whoa. They were just standing there talking and of course I'm sure the argument, the words were getting heated, but I didn't get that. I didn't understand that probably the conversation was getting heated that they were having and the next thing I know I just saw my uncle just had that knife out, up to that man's throat, trying cut him up.
- R3: Wow!
- I3: Yes, that was probably my first scene of seeing that.
- R4: How old were you when that took place?
- I4: I think I'm between, because S wasn't with us, so, I had to be between 5 and 7. Yeah, I was a little girl but I remember it.
- R5: Do you remember where you were?
- I5: Yeah, It was in Canton. Going right off the road. It's a shop that use to be there, right off the road.
- R6: Do you remember how you felt at the time when he said, "Go outside!"?

- I6: I think I was just confused as to like, “What happened? “Why is my uncle on this man with a knife?” That was it. You know, I didn’t feel like, Oh wow! I just didn’t understand how it was like, we were all just sitting there and the next thing I know, my uncle done jumped on the man.
- R7: Did your uncle actually hurt the man physically?
- I7: Not that I can remember. I don’t know, I know he just pulled out that knife and had him hemmed up. So, I don’t know if he cut him, because he’s cut somebody before.
- R8: So, he had cut somebody before that incident took place?
- I8: Yeah. He’s cut a few people. Yeah, yeah.
- R9: So, this was your daddy’s brother?
- I9: My dad’s brother. Yep.
- R10: How did that impact you or affect you going forward?
- I10: You know, I don’t know. It’s just a memory. I don’t think it affected me. Because, like I said, I didn’t hear the conversation. Or I wasn’t in tune to what was happening to lead up to it. I just know that I saw my uncle. But, I know my dad had a talk with me afterwards, you know, what you saw--it was wrong for your uncle to jump on that man like that and, he explained it, but it was like, “Oh, ok.”
- R11: It was just over?
- I11: Yeah. It was just over. (Laughs).
- R12: So, have there been any other experiences that you remember?
- I12: One night, me and the girls were at the club. We were leaving the club and when we were pulling out these boys were fighting. They were like right there in front of the car, and we saw a guy get stabbed with a screw driver. So, yeah, I saw that. And that was kind of like, “Whoa!”
- R13: How old were you when that happened?
- I13: Gosh, we had to be...we were like, maybe, 19, 20. Nineteen, twenty, twenty-one. Nah, I wasn’t 21. I was probably 18 or 19. Yeah, 18, 19 or 20.
- R14: Tell me what that was like for you.

- I14: It was shocking to see them fighting, but to actually start seeing someone fighting with more than just their hands, you know. To see someone, have a screwdriver and actually stab the guy, you know. We were like, "Whoa!", you know. And it was like right there in front of our car. And I'm like, "Oh my God!" We were like, "Back up!" Because then we were like, we didn't want to go to court. We didn't want to be eye witnesses and then have to tell the story. So, we were like, "Back up, let's go. Let's get out of here."
- R15: So, you didn't stick around?
- I15: No, we did not stick around. We saw it happen and they kinda moved, we just said, "Back up, back up." We turned around and left.
- R16: Was it anybody you knew?
- I16: No. It was no one we knew. We were just at the club and leaving the club and everybody was out going to their cars and we had gotten into our car and that's what happened.
- R17: Now, did that affect you in any kind of way?
- I17: No. It really didn't.
- R18: Was that at a club you frequented?
- I18: Yeah.
- R19: Did you go back the next week?
- I19: Not the next week, but the week after. (Laughs). So, maybe it did...we were like, "So, maybe, we didn't need to go back the next week...we will go back that next week." So, we took a week off and then went back. So, yeah, we went back.
- R20: So, [you experienced violence] when you were a child, then a young adult/early young adult. Any other instances?
- I20: I didn't see it, but I think when my uncle shot my cousin and having my mom see it. It upset me that she had to be there to witness that, to go through all that.
- R21: Tell me about that.
- I21: Well, I wasn't there. It was at grandmama's house. So, it was grandmama, my mom's sister, my mom, and my mom's nephew, which is my mom's brother's son. And an argument took place and something happened. So he [my uncle] went to the car, got his gun, and shot my cousin, his son. And what I can't ever understand, is how, mentally your mind don't say, "Get in your car and go home."

But you didn't, you came back inside, with your gun and you shot your son. And then you still lie about it to this day. You say that your gun slipped out of your pocket. And then you thought your sister and your mom were gonna lie for you in court. So, that just bothers me. Now, that's one that really sticks with me. Minus those two, but just to do that. I think it's just your lack of owning what you did and you still lie to people about how it happened.

R22: He says it was an accident?

I22: Yes, that the gun slipped out of his pocket. When his mother, my mother, and his sister watched him go to the car, get the gun, come back into the house and shoot his son. So, yeah. I think that was the one. Even though I wasn't there it bothers me the most because then you talk about your family, that they shouldn't have told them all that. Really? So, that bothers me the most.

R23: So, he ended up doing time for this?

I23: He did.

R24: But his son did not...that wasn't fatal was it?

I24: No, but it could have been. He got shot in the back and they were not able to remove the bullet.

R25: So, the son still has that bullet today?

I25: Exactly. Exactly.

R26: Tell me how you felt when you heard about that.

I26: I was like, "How dumb can you be?" I think that's the thing that I have a problem with is that there is a mental separation of common sense or just knowing right from wrong. Because, ok, you're like, "Yeah, I'm go show you something--I'm gone go get my gun." And then on the way it never clicks that you're like, "What am I doing? That boy gone learn if he got to learn the hard way, but, I'm gonna go home." No, you actually followed through. [You] come back in and shoot him. There's something mentally not right with that. And then you still lie to people about how it happened and say that your sisters and mother were lying.

R27: And they're the reason why you went to jail.

I27: Uh huh. They told the truth. I don't know. That's the one that bothers me and I wasn't even there.

R28: How old were you when that took place?



- I28: Let me think. Maybe late twenties. Late twenties I think. Yeah, I think it's been almost twenty years maybe, yeah.
- R29: How old was your cousin when he was shot by his father?
- I29: He was a teenager...he was maybe 18, 19. Yeah, because there's maybe ten years between us.
- R30: Tell me how that affected your family.
- I30: It didn't separate the family because everyone knew he had some issues. So it didn't separate them. I know he asked my mom, my grandmother and my aunt to lie for him. My mom was like, "I ain't doing that!" And so you know, he was mad at them, but other than that, it didn't like separate uncles against aunts and mama.
- R31: What about your uncle and your cousin? How did that affect their relationship?
- I31: Well, see, they've always had a bad relationship. When those kids were little, I remember it was a Wednesday night and their mom brought them to the church to [name of church], dropped them off because she said she couldn't do it anymore. She couldn't raise them anymore. So, she actually brought them to my mom, saying that she couldn't do it. She wanted to bring them to my mom, but my mom was like--Daddy had just died, so, she was like, "I can't do four. I know I got to do the two, but, I don't think I can do the two and then two more." So, they went to live with grandmama. So, that's where they went. My nephews--both [their] parents have never been involved, you know, so, I know my cousin, who got shot, his sister told me once about when they were in Florida and how her father. She was like, it wasn't a whipping, it was a beating, how he beat her brother for just something really simple. But she said he beat him so bad. And I was like, something is wrong with him. And then, I have had words with him as well, when my great aunt died, we were at my grandmama's house and we had company. Grandmama was receiving people too because that was her sister. So, grandmama was receiving company, people were stopping by, checking on her too, but my mom asked, she was like, "R, what do we have here to drink?" And he was telling her, but like, mama didn't hear him because she was talking and she was like, "R, what else do we have to drink?" and he said it kind of huff, "I told you we got [blah, blah, blah]." and I was like, "Who you talking to?" And so we had words that night and the police were called. He is very volatile. He does need meds.
- R32: The police were called when you and he had words?
- I32: Um hum.
- R33: Tell me what that was like for you.

- I33: I just think he's crazy. It doesn't really affect me. I just look at it as he's crazy. He's mentally not stable and so I just kinda like, "Ok, he's crazy." I don't internalize it, so, I just look at it as, "You're crazy."
- R34: How do you deal with that?
- I34: What do you mean?
- R35: That's your mom's brother, your uncle. Your grandma is still living, you all go to see your grandma, he's present. Tell me how you deal with that.
- I35: Oh, ok, now I know what you mean...I don't. It's like he's not there.
- R36: So, you kind of ignore him?
- I36: I do. I'll say, "Hey", but that's it, no more than that. And that's how everyone treats him.
- R37: Has it always been like that between you all or has it happened just since that altercation with his son where he shot his son?
- I37: I think it's been like that since he shot his son. Everyone knows he just kind of...yeah...crazy.
- R38: Have you guys ever urged him to get help?
- I38: Yeah. I mean my mom, his mom. Yes. But he doesn't think he has a problem.
- R39: Does he really believe that his gun just fell out of his pocket?
- I39: I think he may be delusional that he may believe that. Because it's not the truth. And the judge even told him, "Do you really want me to sit here and believe that that's what happened? That these women are gonna just make up this lie?" After that--no, that was the main thread that kind of stands out.
- R40: In the last few weeks here in Canton there've been some shootings, over near the church, near your [relatives'] house, like across the street. Tell me what you felt when you first heard that. What thoughts did you have?
- I40: I was glad my grandmother was not at home. She was in the hospital, but it was still bad because my aunt and my cousin were still there. And he had just gotten home so he actually had to lay on the ground. He said he had heard bullets whizzing by.
- R41: I didn't know that.

- I41: Yes. C's girlfriend had just dropped him off and he said that no sooner than she had pulled off that's when the bullets started just spraying. And he said he had kneeled down, but then he said I better lay down.
- R42: My goodness. He could have been seriously hurt.
- I42: Yes. Exactly!
- R43: But then so could his girlfriend.
- I43: Exactly.
- R44: My goodness. Were they anywhere around when the second shooting happened?
- I44: You know, I don't know. I don't know about the second one. I think this younger generation don't know how to just fight, like we did. Back when boys were my age they just had a good old fist fight and the next week they were friends. But now it's all about, "Oh you disrespected me." So, I just think it's different times. Sad, but, I don't know.
- R45: Did you know any of the youngsters that were involved or that were shot?
- I45: I didn't know any of the people. I mean, I've seen the young Caucasian man, I've been at grandma's house and seen him sitting at the park. I had seen him before but the other guys I had not seen before. But I know sitting on my grandmother's porch or sitting in the house, the music would get loud and I would have to step outside and be like, "Hey I got a 91-year old grandmama here." "Oh, we sorry, we sorry." And then you wait a little bit, maybe 30 minutes and the music goes back up. I'd have to step back out and I'm like, "You've said that 30 minutes ago. So you don't really care."
- R46: I guess growing up in this area you probably never thought you'd hear anything like this.
- I46: No! Never.
- R47: It is one thing to hear about violence and it's another thing...
- I47: ...to be a part of it... or to have some people you know. Because you watch the news every night, and you see what's going on. And you're like, "Woo, I'm glad I don't live down there." But in reality, you could live anywhere and violence can happen. It doesn't matter where you live.

- R48: Tell me about the whole ordeal with your uncle, with your mom especially. You said you felt bad that your mom had to go through that whole ordeal and that she had to witness that. Tell me more about that.
- I48: Because it just has to be surreal to see somebody. Ok, first they're arguing, first of all, and you know, that in and of itself. And then he's talking about having to go get his gun and show you. And then you know, she said, she thought he was gone. They thought he was gonna just go to his car and just go home. But here he comes back and shot him. And my mom was like it was just unreal. To see that just kind of happen. But, you know, she's like, that's something that happens at the movies, but to see it happen right in front of you. That's totally different.
- R49: This happened inside of your grandmother's house?
- I49: Her old house. Not this one, it was the one they tore down. Yeah, but, still that same spot, just the old house.
- R50: How was your mother after that? Was she really shaken up? Was she upset? Was she depressed?
- I50: She was upset that her brother didn't use his common sense and use his raising, she would say, "And he knows not to do that," and that's when she would say, "I know he's got something wrong with him." I was like, "I know he's got something wrong with him." It just never clicked. Like, what am I doing. Let me get in my car and go home. That boy gone have to learn the hard way, but he came back. He got it and came back and that's your son. So, I don't know. Crazy.
- R51: Wow! That's a biggie.
- I51: Yes, Pastor.
- R52: So now, in both the instances we talked about, it was men perpetrating violence. Has that affected your relationship with men in any way?
- I52: No. You know, you know the signs of who to deal with, who not to deal with. But, then they can portray themselves of being the best person, but still pay attention to the signs, because crazy gone show himself. (Laughs).
- R53: So, tell me the signs T.
- I53: I mean, I don't know. The signs, you know, they just want to be, you know, always being controlling, wanting to tell you how to dress, wanting to know where you are, you know, "Call me when you get there. Call me when you leaving." I mean, "Who does that?" Who checks in like that? Where they do that at? (Laughs) Who with you? Let me talk to them. That's crazy right there.

Pastor, that's crazy. I ain't never done that. So you know, there be signs. So those of some of the signs, that controlling thing.

R54: So, it sounds like the way you deal with violence is by paying attention to what's going on around you. Looking for the warning signs and withdrawing yourself from the situation before it gets out of hand.

I54: Yes. Now, certain situations, now I will tell you. I was tailgating one Sunday with my brother and some friends of his got into an altercation, and so, I am nosy. And I was like, "Are they fighting?" You know, they were fighting and everything and the next thing I knew is my brother was like, "Get over here." I told him I was just trying to see it. (Laughs) He said, "If something happens to you, then I'm gone have to fight." But for the most part I know how to [recognize when something's not right], "Uh, that don't sound right." But that tone doesn't sound right. So you always have to be ready or try to be ready at least.

R55: When that whole situation happened with your uncle and him shooting his son, was the church helpful?

I55: No.

R56: What could the church have done?

I56: I think churches in Canton are still stuck in 1950, 1960. They think because the church is here and is open on Sunday, they think you should just come. It's a different time now. Back then, I mean, that's what they did and that's fine. But, now, we have technology that has come into people's lives. You don't, you have to stay with the times. And people think, people in Canton think, "No, you don't have to stay with the times, this is church. You should just come." And, I don't, I don't believe that mindset. So, I think, I just don't think they've, and that goes for all of them, Pastor, in the African American communities. I can't say what the Caucasian churches are doing, but I know in the African-American churches, in this community, I don't think they do enough. You know, and I think they close their eyes and their minds. If something goes on they say, "Well, I don't have a problem." I do feel like they don't have a strong men's ministry, you know. The women's ministry is not strong. Sometimes with our churches in Canton, like, how we are. Like, our 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday's service, why can't we just have that service at 11 o'clock and be done with it? Whatever money is raised it goes to that church. But if you have auxiliaries that cross, then it goes to the auxiliaries, you know. I just don't know.

R57: So, when your family was going through that difficult time, your uncle shot his own son, he is on trial, his mom and his two sisters are witnesses against him, it must have been tense with your family.

I57: You know what Pastor, I just don't remember it being tense.

R58: It just was what it was.

I58: It just was what it was. My mom, they were not embarrassed or ashamed. They were just like, my brother needs some help, you know. I mean, they tried to get him some help. There wasn't any tension or any shame on our part. No, it was just, "That's R. He's crazy."

R59: Is there anything the church could have done or you wished they would have done? Is there any way you wish the church, and when I say church, I don't mean any particular one, I just mean the body of Christ. Is there any way you wish the church had reached out to you, your mom, your uncle, anybody that was involved? Your grandmother? His son? What could the body of church have done to help your family during that time?

I59: Maybe they could have reached out and stopped by, you know. Maybe if they had done bible study with them at grandmama's home. Just kind of stopped by and see how things were going or you know, just kind of kept in touch with us...you know. I mean, "We know you're going through a hard time, and family on family crime and we just want to keep checking on you." But that's, not what we do in Canton. It's like, "That's your problem and we're not gone get involved."

R60: When does it become the church's problem in your opinion? The way in what you've observed, when does that ever change?

I60: I really don't know.

R61: Have you remembered a time where you saw that change?

I61: I can remember being a little girl and my mom and my dad being involved in the youth department, "Xyme" We had a strong youth. That's when Canton was like strong. Oh Pastor, there was a strong youth ministry and there was a lot of youth. A lot of kids in Jefferson Circle. It was still a good time but a different time. But, I can remember a time when the kids that my mom had in their youth group started falling off. They did a skit for revival. It was a real cool skit. They got dressed up and were acting like they were just somebody that was just hanging out drinking and carrying on and so, but, I remembered that the pastor didn't see it for what it was. He was mad because they brought a beer can in the church. And that's what he commented on and it hurt. It dampened them. It hurt, it crushed them. And that's the moment that youth started falling apart. They were all very upset that that was all he could see, you know, was that they brought an empty beer can in the church and they were pretending like they were smoking. It was a skit and the skit, it was a good skit. But he didn't see that, he just saw them pretending like they were smoking.

- R62: Was that your generation or the next one?
- I62: They were probably 10 to 15 years older than me.
- R63: That was a long time ago.
- I63: Yeah, daddy was still alive. It was like late 70s. So like early. Well, daddy died in 81. It was like mid to early late 70s - 80s. But they did a lot. They had field day and they were part of the North Georgia Baptist Association and they had it one time and they used the field. They had churches come from all over. A lot of youth, and it was huge. It was a big day. I remember one day I was not able to go because I had gone to Camp John Hope that week and I got sick, so I laid in the back of the church for that whole day because I had gotten sick. But, yeah they had a big turnout. So, it was really good. And I know my mom had always reached out to those kids and was like, what happened? And that's the main thing. They always talked about that. How they really worked hard to get that skit together and to have him, all he could see was the beer can and them pretending to smoke out of just rolled up paper.
- R64: That's really something how they never rebounded from that. It seems like it just stopped.
- I64: It just slowly died off. And, of course, a lot of them that started to go to school.
- R65: And it doesn't sound like it was ever able to come back.
- I65: Noooo...Not the way it was back then. Oh Pastor, I couldn't wait to grow up and be like them.
- R66: Wow! That's disheartening.
- I66: Yes. It is.
- R67: You know, and it really speaks to something that just came to my mind and to my heart. When people are trying to do something different or depict something different than what we may be accustomed to doing or seeing in church, and how one negative comment can just kill it.
- I67: Words, words hurt. They really do. Pastor. I just really feel like in every church within our community, there're people who will just not let new stuff in. They will not let new stuff in. And because of that, people who try to come in and do new things, they've got this wall that they just can't get around or get over because they have these people that got this hold on the churches. It's not just one or two, it's like in all of them, and then they fall away. They're like, "Ok, they're just not receptive to my new ideas and they just go away." I don't know. I don't know.

R68: Well, it seems like, and I don't know, and I haven't been here in a couple of months, however, I did run into a few people today, just from being around town. It sounds like the churches, especially over in the area where St. Paul is, are beginning to work together as a result of what happened. Well, some things that had been done previously with the police department, and as a result of those two recent shootings that took place. . . . I ran into Rev. A today when I was out and about and she was talking about something they did together with the police department last night in the community. So, hopefully things are moving in the right direction. Unfortunately, it seems like sometimes one negative thing will tear something down and it takes a whole lot of consistent positive actions to build it back up again.

I68: See, Daddy died in '80, '81 and my brother would say, "You do that with everything, everything is different." And it seems like time just stopped and then it started going again. So that's how I viewed things. Canton has not been the same. Crack came down and that really killed our community. Canton wasn't always like it is now, you know. It was a good place, Pastor. People got together. They did things together. Jefferson Circle had families, you know, and it looked really nice. I mean, the yards. I mean, it was just families were there. It was just a community, across the river and Stumptown, you know. It looked different than it does now.

R69: So for you, it's not different good?

I69: No. No.

R70: Say more about that.

I70: It's not good because, like I said, about the mid-80s, I was just getting ready to come of age, becoming a teenager. There were two big trees and everybody would come and hang out at the two big trees and they were doing nothing but hanging out and talking. But, by the mid-80s no one was doing that because of the crack. Crack has killed the community. And so for me, after that, it was just crack came to town. And then you had the Cut and the Cut wasn't always bad. You know, the Cut was just that place, well it use to be where people went to hang out at, drank beer, smoked pot or just hung out. But now, you can't catch me going to the Cut. You know, back in the day you could've had me go to the Cut, just to hang out. But now, oh no because it's just the wrong type of setting. And it was the Cut because of the way it was out, but now, I don't know. I just don't see Canton that way. And even when we moved to Woodstock after daddy died, during the week when I was able to drive, I would ride up to Canton just to hang out. But you know, then as I got older, it was like, it's tapped out. So, it's not what it was and I don't know I if it ever will be what it was.

R71: Have you ever shared with anyone the stories you've shared tonight?



I71: Yes. I have.

R72: And when you did what was the response?

I72: Like, I don't know if this is gonna sound funny or bad. But when I tell the story about my dad's brother to like his sisters and they were like, "Lord we know. Yes, that's our brother." (Laughs). It's kind of like we sit and laugh and we talk about that. And when I'm with my friends and we talk about that [incident at the club], we often talk about how he pulled that screwdriver out and stabbed that boy. And we're always like, "We hoped he lived." You know, how serious was it. Our mindset was like, "Let's go," because we didn't want to have to come back and testify. That's where our mindset was, not even to get out and see if he was ok. We were like, let's just go and we didn't want to seem like, you know, and with the other one I can't just see how, you know, not have any remorse for what you did.

R73: So, you have shared that and you don't understand how he doesn't have any remorse?

I73: Yes. I'm just like, "where they do that at?" So, I always say he's a time bomb to me because he could always do it again. Because if you feel like you did nothing wrong, well what you did, you can do it again. But the only thing that keeps you from having a gun is that you're a felon and you can't have a gun.

R74: Not legally.

I74: Right, not legally. And I don't even know if the first time was legal either.

R75: Interesting. Anything else you want to share?

I75: No.

R76: I'm going to stop recording now.

## APPENDIX DD

### INTERVIEW #5

**Legend:**

**R = Researcher**

**I = Interviewee**

- R1: So, tell me about one of the most impactful violent experiences or experiences of violence that you have experienced in your life or that someone close to you has.
- I1: I think the most impactful would be my uncle. I think I was in middle school and he's a nice guy and not one to get into trouble or anything like that. But he got beat up pretty badly. He was beat up so bad that his mouth had to be wired for a long time. I don't remember how long exactly. I think that was the closest to violence that I have experienced.
- R2: Tell me more about that. Like, you were in middle school.
- I2: I think I was in middle school...high school. That's all I really member. Except, I remember, this guy, like I said, was not like a rough person or anything like that and like I said, he got beat up pretty badly.
- R3: Tell me how you felt when you heard about that.
- I3: I guess I can begin that bad things can happen to good people. I mean, I was kind of wondering why would this happen to him. I don't really know the details, if it was something random or, um, I'm not sure of the details as to why. I just remember thinking, "This is not the kind of person I would think would deserve something like that."
- R4: Did you see him before you heard about it or you heard about it first?
- I4: I don't remember. I'm sure I probably heard about it first. It was a really, small town and I'm sure I probably heard about it first.
- R5: Do you remember the first time you saw him after he was beat up?
- I5: I don't remember if it was the first time; but I do have a vision in my head of the experience and what he looked like. His face was pretty swollen. But that vision, I don't really remember if that was the first time, or just that I'm able to connect with that particular memory.
- R6: Do you have any feelings associated with that vision of how he looked?
- I6: Nothing more than what that must have felt like for him, which was kind of unimaginable.

- R7: Was that the first time you had experienced violence?
- I7: That I can remember. When I was growing up my mother and my dad. My dad was abusive to my mother. But, I don't really remember specific instances of that. My parents got divorced when I was in the fourth grade. This all happened like really early in life. But, I don't remember like actually seeing any of that that happened.
- R8: Was the abuse physical?
- I8: It was physical.
- R9: So, you must remember hearing about it then.
- I9: Yes, hearing about it. Exactly.
- R10: Tell me what that was like. Hearing about that, how often you heard about it and what it was like for you to hear that.
- I10: Well, I heard about it primarily from my mother later, later in life. So, in terms of impact, it just made me think, "Why would my dad do something like that?" To her or to anyone?
- R11: As you were sharing that, I was just remembering that, maybe a month or so ago, your dad passed away. And I remember you telling me before and during the time of his illness, you guys had not been very close. But I think, if my memory serves me correctly, that you reconnected in your adulthood.
- I11: Right.
- R12: So, what is it like to say what you just said now and to have that memory, like, "wondering why would your dad do something like that." What is it like to have that memory, to rehearse that now in light of your dad not being here anymore?
- I12: Well, it's interesting because I haven't really thought about that in a long time, and even in my most recent reconnection with my dad, I never even thought about it. And the conversations that we had wasn't something that I really wanted like to know. It just never crossed my mind actually.
- R13: So, have there been any other experiences of violence throughout your life?
- I13: Not that I can remember.
- R14: Those were pretty early, like you said your parents got divorced when you were in the fourth grade, but you heard about from your mom later. Your uncle--that happened later, after your parents got divorced and you were wondering what that

must have felt like for him. What about as an adult, have there been any experiences of violence perpetrated against you or someone you know?

I14: No.

R15: Well, you've been pretty blessed.

I15: I know. Like, when I thought about the purpose for this research study, I was like, wow, I'm pretty sure some people have probably had some pretty startling experiences. But, in terms of directly, no.

R16: Often when we think about violence, we think about physical force, but sometimes violence can be emotional, it can be psychological or mental, it can even be economic. It can be verbal. So, as you think about kind of broadening the definition of violence and what it means, can you think of any kinds of instances or circumstances where you might have been exposed to violence that was not physical?

I16: Well, I think about actually my marriage, but I'm not sure how I would categorize that. But, my ex-husband was eleven years older than I am and I think that at some point in our marriage, I kind of felt like, I don't know, I'm not going to say that I wasn't good enough. But, I don't know, well, it was almost like I wasn't good enough. Seems like he would find ways to downplay me, if that makes sense. And it seems like the more we kind of grew apart, the more that seemed to be happening. So, I don't know if that fits into the category of what you're talking about.

R17: It sounds like it might have been emotional or verbal.

I17: Probably some verbal, some nonverbal that played into my emotions.

R18: Can you tell me more about that?

I18: I think it had to do with my ex was like a very proud man, and like I said, he was 11 years older than I am. He grew up in a very old-school traditional type household. And it seemed like, well I was more educated than he was, and it seemed like the more I like advanced (and at one point he kinda fell off his advancement), and that's when it kinda seems like it was like the worst.

R19: How did you handle that? Tell me how it affected you.

I19: I pretty much started to ignore it. I mean it was hurtful, obviously. But, at some point I just started to ignore it and just tried not to let it get in my head. But it made me lose respect for him that's for sure.

R20: That must have been painful.

- I20: It was pretty disappointing.
- R21: How long were you guys married?
- I21: For 24 years.
- R22: Of the 24 years, how long did the verbal and emotional attacks last?
- I22: Maybe 10 years.
- R23: That's a long time. Tell me how effective ignoring was for you? Did that protect you? What did that do for you?
- I23: I think to some degree it protected me and allowed me to at least be sane in my household, as sane as I could be. But, I don't think I really realized until after I got divorced that it really was doing me no good and I should have done something else about it. Because I hardly would say anything back.
- R24: If you had to go back through that again, what would you do differently?
- I24: I think I would probably just communicate my feelings more than that I did.
- R25: So, was it out of the verbal and emotional attacks that the divorce arose?
- I25: It was those attacks that kind of led to, kinda falling out of love with my ex. But, it was another situation that actually caused the divorce to occur.
- R26: That must have been very painful,
- I26: It was. It kinda makes you think like, "What was wrong with me?"
- R27: So, have you ever told anyone what you've just shared?
- I27: I have a friend that I talk to--well, actually two, a cousin and a friend that I talk to about most things, so, yeah.
- R28: So, did you find sharing your experiences with them helpful?
- I28: Very. Very.
- R29: Very good. I'm wondering how dealing with that those circumstances in your marriage, because what you shared, you shared two separate events. [Those events] were not really connected. In your parents' case, you don't remember a longevity of that. You remember what your mom told you about it. With your uncle, that was one incident--it wasn't like he was getting beat up every other day.

But, with your marriage, it was like 10 years of dealing with the verbal and emotional abuse.

I29: ...maybe longer...

R30: And of you dealing with that every day, so I'm wondering how did that change you? Did you change? What happened with your feelings? What happened, did you change as a result of how you relate to people? Did your level of trust change? Anything like that?

I30: I think what it did was, I don't know how to explain it but, it was almost like, I grew up like, thinking for some reason, I needed to be perfect, near perfect. So, when my marriage wasn't perfect, there was still like a need to portray that outside of the household. So, that was probably the most difficult part about what was going on inside the house and then we're outside trying to be something else that we weren't. And as the years went on that got like, more difficult. But, I've learned a lot based on that experience since then that, you know, it's ok for me to speak up about who I am, what I want, what I like, what I don't like, you know. So, I have definitely learned a humongous lesson out of all of that.

R31: How has that affected relationships that you had during that marriage, and relationships you've had after the marriage? And, I don't mean just, you know, romantic relationships, but, just relationships with friends, family members, other interests. How has that affected your relationships going forward?

I31: I think it has helped them to grow because I was pretty reserved in my marriage. I didn't really like, reach out. Didn't really foster relationships with people outside of the marriage. We went like, to our families' homes for holidays and things like that, but really having a real good relationship outside of the marriage, friendships or fostering friendships, I didn't really do that. Like, at all. So, now I feel like that that's a lot that I've missed out on, a lot of my friends. I haven't had the opportunity to really get to hang out with my friends and get to know who they are, to just kind of enjoy life.

R32: So, sounds like you're having the opportunity to do that now.

I32: I am. (Laughs)

R33: Well, that's wonderful. Tell me what was going on in your marriage for 10 years. Tell me what, if any, affect you think that might have had on your son.

I33: That's hard. I don't know. I don't know the answer to that. Because I think that we tried to shield what was going on with us from him. I don't know how effective that was because I haven't talked to my son. But, one thing I've noticed about him. He's twenty-five and he hasn't really had like, a long-term relationship with anyone that I'm aware of. I'll just put it that way. And, I think I

would be aware of that. He seems to, at least comments that he's made me, it seems like he's searching for something that he is not able to find yet. I mean, I know he's still young. So, I don't know how that has affected him.

R34: Does he want a long-term relationship?

I34: I think he does. I mean, some conversations that we've had, I think he does. He just says, like I said, he's made references that he can't find what he wants.

R35: Has he been explicit about what he wants?

I35: The only thing he's said to me, and this is pretty vague, is he wants somebody like me.

R36: Aww! (Laughs)

I36: I don't know what all of that means.

R37: That's so sweet. (Laughs)

I37: So, I don't know. I know he's pretty young and he has plenty of time to find the right person. I definitely have told him not to rush it because he is pretty young.

R38: I want to go back to something you said earlier about, how you said about your uncle, if you saw him first or heard it first, you said, "I'm pretty sure that I heard it first because I live in a small town." I wonder if you ever heard anything about the physical abuse that your mother endured while you were in that small town, outside of what your mom told you.

I38: I don't think so...no.

R39: And I'm also wondering, kind of going back to what you've shared about your marriage, if I remember some things you have told me correctly, I think that you and your husband went to the same church and probably at least part of the time that your marriage was headed to divorce. And when I ask this question, I am not asking about that church in particular, when I say the church, I mean the body of Christ in general. Is there anything that the church, the body of Christ, possibly could have done to help you, your husband or your family in what you were going through? Because it sounds like, when you were talking about that, I kind of got a picture that you're going to church and you're looking like the "picture perfect" family, but you go home, and excuse me, but, it's a living hell.

I39: The church building that we were going to at that time, to me, was kinda cliquish and I would not have felt comfortable going to anyone in that church to say, "Hey, we've got some problems, we need some help." So, you would think that a church would be in a position to help, and I would think that if we did, you know,

that they would've helped. But I personally didn't feel comfortable doing that at that time at that particular church if that makes any sense.

R40: Did you and your husband ever even discuss getting any type of counseling or even seeking pastoral care?

I40: We actually, well, I recommended it to talk to the pastor there, but he wasn't willing to do that.

R41: If you had to do it over again, even though you didn't feel comfortable reaching out, could there have been any way that the church could have reached out to you, even though they didn't see behind the curtain?

I41: I'm not sure what you mean.

R42: Like, could there have been a place provided by, not that particular building, but the body of Christ, where you could have gone to get help, to get strengthened, where your husband could have gone to get help or support, where your son could have gone to get help or support? Even though you looked like a "picture perfect" family that didn't need any help. Could there have been a way to reach out to you?

I42: I think that if there was a way, I think that may have been an option. But, it would have had to have been somewhere that no one knew us.

R43: It would have had to have been anonymous?

I43: Anonymous and confidential in some way.

R44: Ok. So, in this case, it wasn't helpful that you guys were known where you were?

I44: Right. I mean we were both officers in the church so yes.

R45: That makes it very difficult unfortunately.

I45: Yeah.

R46: Wow. Tell me if there is anyone in your circle of family or friends, other than what you've told me already who has been a victim of violence, whether it was physical or otherwise.

I46: Not that I can think of. Not that I'm aware of.

R47: If there was, and there was one thing that anyone could've done to help you and your family, what would that one thing have been while the verbal assaults were



happening and the emotional assaults were happening? If there was one thing anybody could have done to help you guys, what would that have been?

- I47: I think maybe just, you know, somebody who we may have talked to and be completely honest without somebody, you know, that person being judgmental. Just to be completely open and honest with. And somebody that could provide some Godly counsel. I think that may have been helpful. Maybe it could have been helpful.
- R48: Tell me how you guys moved passed what happened during your marriage. How did you move past that and get through divorce and remain there for your child, so he could have a healthy relationship with both of you?
- I48: We're still in progress. (Laughs). My ex actually didn't talk to me for a long time. Just on an as needed type basis, you know, if I was to reach out when something was needed, usually something with our son. I think that he thinks that I made his world just, crashed his world, which I did. So, I mean, I would love to like talk to him and really understand what his feelings currently are, because I'm hoping that we can have a healthy cordial relationship for our son's sake. But, I don't know if he's there yet. The first time we ever had a conversation that felt anything like normal was in February. Our son got an award and we both were there and we sat beside each other. So, it was a descent conversation.
- R49: You said you "crashed his world." Deliberately?
- I49: Not deliberately. Well, I don't know, it depends on what you mean by deliberately. (Laughs). So, my ex was having an affair and he had had them before during our marriage, but this particular one was, I guess was one that something just triggered "That's enough. That's enough for me in this marriage." So, I hired a private investigator and he was investigated for three months because I wanted to be sure. Because all of the previous ones, somehow, he would make me think that I was just imagining things. So, I wanted to have the proper evidence to know what I was talking about because he was very respected within the community and the church, all of that. So, that's what I did and so, his world as he knew it changed drastically as a result of our divorce.
- R50: But, it really wasn't your doing. That was his doing.
- I50: Right.
- R51: Well, hopefully one day you all can have a cordial relationship.
- I51: Yes, that would be good. I would be open to that. And I'm not, you know, I don't have any negative or ill feelings towards him or anything like that so.
- R52: Does he still live around here?

- I52: He does.
- R53: He does?
- I53: Matter of fact I keep looking around St. Paul thinking he might show up one day. (Laughs). He lives off Exit 14. He lives right around the corner from our house.
- R54: Oh wow! I didn't know that. So, well... (Laughs)
- I54: I didn't know that either until my son shared that with me.
- R55: Oh wow! So, well, anything else you want to share?
- I55: I don't think so.
- R56: I appreciate what you have shared because I know that you are a very private person and I appreciate that you have shared. I want to just take a minute to ask you, how was that for you? Because at times I could see your facial expressions changing. You have the same face pretty much all the time. But, at some points when we were talking I could see your facial expressions changing. Like, maybe this is getting a little bit too close.
- I56: Yeah. Just to be able to share this with somebody, I know I know you, but you're not in my close little circle of two to three people. So, to be able to share that level of detail is something I haven't done. I mean, people know that I'm divorced. I just really started even sharing the why the last six months to a year so I'm still feeling a little uncomfortable with that. So, that's what I think you were seeing.
- R57: How was it for you to be able to share that outside of your close circle? How does that feel?
- I57: It felt ok. Like I said, a little bit guarded at first, but, I mean, at this point, it's just a fact of what happened. And I think to some degree to talk about it it's kind of a release as well.
- R58: Well, that's good to know. Any questions you want asked me or any concerns you want to bring up?
- I58: No.
- R59: Anything else you want to talk about that's pressing?
- I59: No.
- R60: Well, I'm going to stop the recording now.

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