

ALLIANCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MEASURING CONGREGATIONAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE BLACK  
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH'S EFFECTIVENESS IN  
PURSUING SOCIAL JUSTICE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

JOHN WATSON WALKER

ROCKLAND, NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 2014

UMI Number: 3684983

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI 3684983

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346



To my father: Watson MacDonald Walker  
January 5, 1933 – June 8, 2002

APPROVAL SHEET

This ministry focus paper entitled  
MEASURING CONGREGATIONAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE BLACK  
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH'S EFFECTIVENESS IN  
PURSUING SOCIAL JUSTICE


Written by

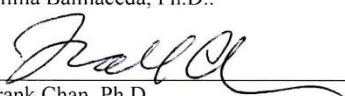
John Watson Walker

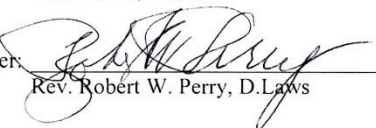
and submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

has been accepted by the Faculty of Alliance Theological Seminary  
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

Director of the D.Min. Program  
or Alternative Institutional Representative:   
Vilma Balmaceda, Ph.D.

First Reader:   
Frank Chan, Ph.D.

Second Reader:   
Rev. Robert W. Perry, D.Laws

Date Received: December 2014

---

## ABSTRACT

Title: Measuring Congregational Perceptions About the Black Missionary Baptist Church's Effectiveness in Pursuing Social Justice  
Author: John Watson Walker  
Degree: Doctor of Ministry  
Date: May 2015  
Advisers: Dr. Frank Chan  
Dr. Paul King

The present study is an attempt to describe the perceptions on the part of congregants of the Black Missionary Baptist Church in New Britain, CT, with respect to the church's pursuit of social justice, measured in the midst of public rallies organized by the BMBC in the summer of 2013, protesting the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a white neighborhood watchman who shot black teenager Trayvon Martin. The researcher used three sources of data to measure perceptions (observations at the rally, a survey of, and interviews with, BMBC members, both during the time of the rally) and concluded that there is a basic foundational commitment to social justice, though there are indicators that the strength of this commitment is questionable. BMBC members were willing and able to attend and be engaged at a specified action-step with a social injustice symbol (like Trayvon Martin), but were less capable of following through or conceiving of action-steps beyond the rally.

# CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS .....	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	x
CHAPTER 1: DISSERTATION OVERVIEW .....	1
Introduction.....	2
Community Context of Blacks in New Britain, Connecticut .....	2
Church Context: The BMBC in New Britain and its Commitment to Social Justice. ....	4
Statement of the Ministry Problem and Purpose of Research .....	14
Model of Research, Hypotheses and Research Questions.....	15
Empirical Unknowns .....	17
Definition of Terms.....	18
Limitations and Assumptions of the Study.....	20
Theological and / Theological Framework .....	21
Biblical Calls to Social Justice.....	21
Social Justice Themes Proclaimed by Christian Thinkers and Black Church Leaders .....	22
Summary .....	27
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	29
Literature on the Social Justice Themes in Black Preaching and Black Worship ...	30
Literature Related to the Black Missionary Baptist Church’s Involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.....	32
Literature Related to the Thought of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.....	35
Literature Related to the Thought of James H. Cone.....	37
Literature Related to the Significance of Trayvon Martin to the Black Church.....	38
Literature Related to White Police Officers’ Unfair Treatment of Black Men.....	40
Summary .....	41
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	42
Data Source #1: The PSJA Survey .....	42
Distribution and Collection of the Surveys.....	42
Data Source #2: Researcher Observation at the Trayvon Martin Rally in New Britain .....	44
Announcement of the Two Rallies .....	44
Researcher Observations at the Two Rallies .....	45

Data Source #3: The Interviews.....	45
Recruitment of Participants.....	45
Description of Participants and the Location of the Interviews.....	46
Interview Questions .....	47
Summary .....	48
CHAPTER 4: DATA RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS.....	49
Findings from Data Source #1: PSJA Survey.....	49
The Individual PSJA Questions: Basic Foundational Commitment to Social Justice .....	49
PSJA Subscores: Indicators that the Strength of Commitment is Questionable.....	50
Congregants’ Personal Commitment to Social Justice (PSJA, Q5, Q9 and Q11) ....	50
Congregants’ Perception of the Ideal BMBC (PSJA, Q1, Q12 and Q13) .....	51
Congregants’ Perception of the Actual BMBC (PSJA, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q7, Q8, Q10). 51	
<i>Findings from the Data Source #2: The Trayvon Martin Rallies in New Britain</i> ...	53
Researcher Observations at the First Rally.....	53
Notes about the Second Rally: August 1, 2013 .....	58
Findings from the Data Source #3: Interviews .....	61
Summary .....	69
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	70
Reflections on Findings .....	70
Positive Findings.....	70
Negative Findings.....	70
Reflections on the Generalizability of Findings for the Black Church beyond New Britain .....	71
Reflection: Is Social Justice (Racial Equality) the Mission of the BMBC or the NAACP Moving Forward? Has the Mantle been Passed from the Religious Organization to the Civic Organization? .....	72
Recommendations.....	73
On the Research Design and Recommendations for Further Research .....	73
Recommendations to the BMBC Leadership: How Can the BMBC and its Members “Do Better” (as the Interviewees said) in Advancing Social Justice? .....	74
Final Reflection: Addressing the Sense of “Futility” .....	77
APPENDICES .....	79
A. Survey Questions .....	79
B. Results of Survey .....	81



C. Scoring System for the PSJA Survey .....	83
D. Charts Illustrating PSJA Survey Responses.....	84
E. Speakers from the Rally dated July 27, 2013 .....	98
F. Speakers from the Rally dated August 1, 2013 .....	99
G. Trayvon Martin Rally Photos.....	100
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	104

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### Tables

1. Participant Demographic Information .....	466
2. Researcher's observations regarding approximate attendance at the first rally..	544
3. Participant Responses by Generation.....	622

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMBC	Black Missionary Baptist Church
CFEJ	Citizens For Equal Justice
PSJA	Perception of Social Justice Activism
PICO	People Improving Communities through Organizing

## CHAPTER 1:

### DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The present study is an attempt to describe the perceptions on the part of congregants of the Black Missionary Baptist Church in New Britain, CT, with respect to the church's pursuit of social justice, measured in the midst of public rallies organized by the BMBC in the summer of 2013, protesting the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a white neighborhood watchman who shot black teenager Trayvon Martin.

Chapter 1 introduces the subject and frames eight research questions that structure the study. Three hypotheses summarize the findings.

Chapter 2 surveys literature related to the topic of the black church's pursuit of social justice, according to various subheadings, including the history of the civil rights movement, the thoughts of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and of Dr. James Cone.

Chapter 3 sets forth the research methodology by which the researcher sought out three sources of data: researcher observations of BMBC members at a Trayvon Martin rally, and a survey and interviews of BMBC members taken at the same time as the rally.

Chapter 4 presents the findings, which support the hypothesis that while there is a strong foundational commitment to social justice among members of the BMBC, there are indicators that the strength of this commitment is questionable (H1). Two other hypotheses address the BMBC's response to the New Britain rallies for Trayvon Martin (H2) and different perceptions of social justice activism according to different age groups (H3).

Chapter 5 presents conclusions and recommendations for further research as well as recommendations for the leadership of the BMBC moving forward.

## **Introduction**

### Community Context of Blacks in New Britain, Connecticut

This project's participants are in the BMBC in the New Britain, CT area. According to city data records, New Britain has a population of over 500,000 residents.<sup>1</sup> The town is located nine miles southwest of Hartford, CT in Hartford County and is approximately thirteen and one half square miles wide. According to Pat Watson, librarian for the town of New Britain and Dr. Evelyn Phillips, Professor of Anthropology at Central Connecticut State University, New Britain was initially a part of Farmington/Berlin, CT.<sup>2</sup> It was basically a farming community that also made bells and other metal products. In the early 1850s, New Britain petitioned the state of Connecticut and separated from Farmington/Berlin to become its own borough. In 1870, New Britain was incorporated into a city.

New Britain consists of Caucasians, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Laotians, Mexicans, some Native Americans and Polish. City data records in 2013 show the population of New Britain is 40 % black.<sup>3</sup> According to Dr. Phillips, "during the time of the late 1600s and early 1700s there was major tension between the white settlers and the

---

<sup>1</sup> 2013 Town of New Britain, CT data records.

<sup>2</sup> Pat Watson and Dr. Evelyn Phillips, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, June 10, 2014 and June 13, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> 2013 Town of New Britain, CT data records.

natives when the town was being developed.”<sup>4</sup> In the town, there were free blacks who were descendants of Africa, as well as those who were indentured, and others who were slaves. Blacks migrated to New Britain from other eastern seaboard states including, but not limited to, Georgia, North and South Carolina, New York and Virginia.

New Britain was once known as the “Hardware Capitol of the World.”<sup>5</sup> Some of the manufacturing plants were Stanley Works, Russell and Erwin was a business in New Britain which was sold and is now a part of Black and Decker. Additionally, North and Judd operated a factory that made hardware for horses, and clasps for shipping and various other items out of metal. Business owners would sometimes travel down south to recruit black people to work in the New Britain area picking tobacco and during World Wars I and II, business owners would recruit blacks from the south to work in New Britain factories. Initially, the blacks that came north were not hired to work as machinists. Instead, they were hired to clean the toilets, mop floors and other demeaning and derogatory work. This continued until an unnamed woman wrote Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Theodore Roosevelt, complaining about the lack of opportunities for blacks to be hired as machinists in the factories. As a result of this letter, within forty eight hours a directive from Washington, DC was issued mandating factories to include blacks as machinists in the workforce because the businesses received federal subsidies.<sup>6</sup>

Blacks also migrated to New Britain during the 1930s when the Works Progress Administration formed in 1935. This program provided jobs to blacks and others in the

---

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Evelyn Phillips, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, June 13, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Pat Watson, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, June 10, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Evelyn Phillips, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, June 13, 2014.

construction field. Workers would pave roads, erect buildings; and develop parks and schools. During the migration of the 1940s, a sense of activism started to develop in New Britain. Blacks wanted better jobs and better educational opportunities. This caused an influx of blacks to enroll in Central Connecticut State University. With this enrollment, blacks would be more qualified for jobs when and if they became available.

#### Church Context: The BMBC in New Britain and its Commitment to Social Justice

Today there are approximately seventy churches in New Britain, CT.<sup>7</sup> Included in this list are five Baptist churches, the oldest of which is First Baptist Church, whose congregation is predominately white. The other four Baptist churches are considered traditional Black Baptist Missionary Churches: Saint James Missionary Baptist Church has an active membership of seventy-five; Second Baptist Church and Peace Missionary Baptist Church have an active membership of thirty-five each; and True Vine Missionary Baptist Church has an active membership of fifteen. Although the Black Baptist Churches are part of the Baptist denomination, each of the churches function autonomously. The Black Missionary Baptist Churches (BMBC) in New Britain, CT started as one church, Saint James Missionary Baptist Church, incorporated in May 1949. The present researcher has been the pastor of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church for the past six years.

The BMBC from its very early years took it upon itself to confront civil rights violations in the community. In the 1960s, members of the Saint James Missionary Baptist Church marched for civil rights. According to Bertha Burkes, a sixty year

---

<sup>7</sup> New Britain Library Records 2014.

member of Saint James, members of the church boarded busses and participated in the march on Washington on August 28, 1968. This march culminated at the Lincoln Memorial where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his historic “I Have a Dream” speech. Saint James, for over fifty years, has been actively involved with the local NAACP. Additionally, according to Bertha Burkes, Saint James held peaceful demonstrations in the pursuit of social justice.<sup>8</sup> According to Gerald Ross Jr., another longtime member of the BMBC, “During the civil rights era often time it was expected blacks would be involved in the cause. The BMBC’s of New Britain and members of the NAACP would stand united to fight for racial equality for the citizens of the New Britain community.”<sup>9</sup>

Today, sadly, there are still numerous civil rights violations and systemic discriminatory judicial practices perpetrated upon the black community in New Britain. According to New Britain State’s Attorney Brian Preleski, non-white narcotics dealers are typically sentenced to hard jail time, while Caucasian buyers of drugs are typically offered drug rehabilitation programs allowing them to remain in the community.<sup>10</sup> Preleski also noted in an interview that there is a high degree of recidivism among persons of color in the judicial system.<sup>11</sup> The present researcher believes there is a timeliness to initiating a discussion regarding congregational perceptions about BMBC involvement with social protest.

---

<sup>8</sup> Bertha Burkes, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, January 20, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Gerald Ross, Jr., interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, February 11, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Preleski, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, circa July 25, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



The BMBC historically was always active in civil rights. Burkes stated, “The Black Church was where black members of the community would turn during times of turmoil.”<sup>12</sup> Burkes also stated the BMBC would also unite when there was a perceived wrong done to blacks in the judicial system.<sup>13</sup>

*The Trayvon Martin Homicide: A Test Case for Measuring Perceptions.*

The present researcher saw a timely opportunity to measure and describe attitudes of members of the BMBC in New Britain, CT during the aftermath of a high profile case of social injustice during the summer of 2013. The case in question involved the possible civil rights violations suffered by Trayvon Martin. Trayvon was a seventeen-year-old unarmed young black boy shot and killed by George Zimmerman, a white Hispanic man, on February 26, 2012.<sup>14</sup> More recently, the shooting death of Michael Brown, another unarmed eighteen-year old black male, by white police officer Darren Wilson, in Ferguson, MO, offers some parallels to the Trayvon Martin case. The Michael Brown shooting led to many nights of civil unrest, as many blacks feel Wilson should be arrested for the murder of Michael Brown.<sup>15</sup> The sense of unequal protection under the law continues to this day in the black community.

---

<sup>12</sup> Bertha Burkes, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, January 20, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Susan Jacobson, “Boy, 17, shot to death in Sanford during “altercation” police say” *Orlando Sentinel*, February 29, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Julie Bosman and Emma G. Fitzsimmons, “Grief and Protest Follow Shooting of a Teenager” *New York Times*, August 10, 2014.

### *The Shooting of Trayvon Martin.*

On Sunday, February 26, 2012 in Sanford, Florida, according to the sworn statement of George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watchman, he encountered Trayvon Martin in the housing complex while on patrol looking for suspicious persons.<sup>16</sup> Martin was allegedly walking to his father's home in the complex after returning from a nearby convenience store where he bought Arizona Iced Tea and a bag of Skittles candy. Zimmerman stated there had recently been some burglaries in the area and that he thought Martin looked suspicious. Zimmerman thought Martin did not belong in the neighborhood. According to Zimmerman, Martin was moving between buildings and had a hooded sweatshirt on (it was raining). Upon observing Martin acting "suspiciously," Zimmerman called the police to alert them of his observation. Zimmerman was told by police officials not to follow Martin, but to try to keep an eye on him. Zimmerman stated at some point he lost eye contact with Martin and was subsequently surprised by Martin. During a struggle with Martin, Zimmerman pulled his licensed firearm and shot Martin in the chest, killing him.

### *The Investigation, Reaction and Acquittal.*

Upon being questioned by the Sanford Police regarding the killing of Trayvon Martin, it was determined that Zimmerman did not have an obligation to retreat under Florida's "Stand Your Ground Laws."<sup>17</sup> These laws state that you do not have to retreat

---

<sup>16</sup> Erin Donaghue, "George Zimmerman trial: Opening statements launch Monday" *CBS News*, July 24, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Florida Statutes. 776.013. Home protection; use of deadly force; presumption of fear of death or great bodily harm.

if you feel your life or the life of someone else is being threatened. Subsequent to his release, Angela B. Corey, State Attorney for the Fourth Judicial Circuit was appointed as special prosecutor to investigate whether Zimmerman broke any laws in the killing of Martin. During the investigation, a great public outcry ensued. There were many rallies across the country because a large number of people believed a grave injustice had occurred.<sup>18</sup> These rallies and demonstrations demanded Zimmerman be arrested and charged in the death of Martin. Many believed Zimmerman racially profiled Martin and some believed Martin was killed because he was black. New York City mayoral candidate Bill Thompson said Martin was killed because he was black and that the same bias drives the NYPD's controversial "stop and frisk" policy.<sup>19</sup> Another vocal demonstrator was Min. Mikhail Muhammad, of the New Black Panthers Party, a group that handed out fliers with Zimmerman's picture and the caption "Wanted Dead or Alive." Minister Muhammad stated, "The New Black Panthers did not come here to divide people. They are already divided. We came today because we are making an appeal: do justice. Our children are tired of being shot, dying and being murdered."<sup>20</sup>

Six weeks after the killing of Martin, Special Prosecutor Corey charged Zimmerman with murder. The trial began June 10, 2013 in Sanford, Florida. On July 13, 2013, Zimmerman was acquitted of second degree murder and manslaughter in the death of Trayvon Martin.

---

<sup>18</sup> Paul Brandeis Raushenbush, "Trayvon Martin 'Not Guilty' Verdict Sparks Hoodie Sunday at Black Churches" *Huffington Post*, July 14, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> "Trayvon Martin was killed because he was black," NYC mayoral candidate Bill Thompson says" *Associated Press*, July 28, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Min. Muhammad Mikhail, Sanford City Hall, *WFTV*, March 22, 2012.

*The Verdict in the Trayvon Martin Killing Sparks National Protest.*

On July 19, 2013, *The Washington Post* highlighted the main voice to emerge in the cry for justice for Trayvon Martin: that of the Rev. Al Sharpton, the President and Founder of National Action Network.<sup>21</sup> This organization supports causes of people wronged by individuals and or the United States government. *The Washington Post* said Rev. Sharpton is “A veteran champion of issues involving African Americans... who helped draw national attention to Martin’s shooting last year by leading a rally in Sanford, FL.”<sup>22</sup> Sharpton led an effort to have George Zimmerman arrested. Prior to this, Rev. Sharpton led a group of ministers to the steps of the Justice Department in Washington, DC to demand Mr. Zimmerman be held accountable for the senseless killing of Trayvon Martin.

*Citizens for Equal Justice (CFEJ) and the New Britain Rallies over Trayvon Martin.*

On Sunday, July 14, 2013, after much prayer and contemplation, the civic organization Citizens For Equal Justice (CFEJ) was formed in response to the not guilty verdict of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin. The CFEJ consisted of religious leaders from the New Britain, CT area as well as lay persons in the BMBC. The organization was formed by the author of this paper to give a voice to social justice issues faced by the BMBC in the New Britain area. The CFEJ believes a majority of the cases involving white perpetrators are disposed by the courts with more favorable dispositions than those where the perpetrator is black or a person of color. The CFEJ

---

<sup>21</sup> Paul Farhi, “Al Sharpton Plays Several Sides in Trayvon Martin Story” *Washington Post*, July 19, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

organization is not the BMBC, but was born out of the church to be a vehicle to help bring about change. The members of CFEJ were mainly members of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church. This author is the founder and chair of CFEJ. This community activism group is an integral ministry of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church. Meetings involving CFEJ are held at Saint James in one of their meeting rooms. The two ministries endeavor to be effective in pursuing social justice for all people, though their focus is on the perceived judicial inequality as it relates to blacks and people of color. The mission statement of CFEJ calls for its members to stand up and confront inequality and injustice wherever it is found. It is the belief of CFEJ that all people deserve fair and equal justice under the laws of the United States.

After much prayer and deliberation, the CFEJ decided to sponsor two rallies. The first was scheduled for Saturday, July 27, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. at the New Britain Superior Court. This author was the lead organizer of that first rally. This was the first and only occasion that this author ever had to organize a rally of any kind. On Wednesday, July 17, 2013, the author met with a reporter for the *New Britain Herald*, a local newspaper in the city of New Britain,<sup>23</sup> and later with a member of the New Britain Police Department, who expressed appreciation for the open communication with the police. Over the next several days, three members of CFEJ made signs for the rally, with slogans like, “No Justice, No Peace,” “Justice for Trayvon,” “I Am Trayvon,” “Skittles + Ice Tea =/= Death,” “Save Our Black Boys” and “Equal Justice under the Law.”

---

<sup>23</sup> See, Lisa Backus, “Rally focuses on Civil Rights” *New Britain Herald* (July 27, 2013) for a local newspaper account of the first rally.

The message that needed to be given to the members of BMBC was that black people, particularly black men and young boys, are in a crisis. This author wanted the members of the BMBC to know the black man is an “endangered species” and declared later from the pulpit his belief that the killing of Trayvon Martin was murder and blacks should be able to walk to the store without fear of being shot and killed (see “Announcement of the Rallies” in chapter 3). This writer on that occasion reminded the congregation of years gone by when blacks were killed for merely looking at white people or whistling at a white girl.<sup>24</sup> The congregation was also reminded of how three white men dragged and killed James Byrd, a black man in Houston, TX.<sup>25</sup>

The rally was publicized in the local newspaper and with event flyers.<sup>26</sup> There were also letters sent to churches in the New Britain, Plainville, Bristol and Hartford areas alerting them to the rally. CFEJ also asked local churches to put announcements in their weekly bulletins. A mass email sent to members of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church. Lastly, an invitation was sent to the New Britain chapter of the NAACP home office for distribution to their members.

On July 15, 2013, the *Stamford Advocate*<sup>27</sup> identified other Connecticut churches in Stamford and Bridgeport that would also hold rallies after the acquittal of George

---

<sup>24</sup> Scott McCabe, “14 Year Old Emmitt Till Murdered In Mississippi” *New York Times*, August 28, 1955.

<sup>25</sup> Leslie Casimir, “James Byrd Dragged and Killed in Jasper, Texas” *Houston Chronicle*, June 8, 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Lisa Backus, “Rally to be held in New Britain on Zimmerman verdict” *New Britain Herald*, July 24, 2013

<sup>27</sup> Linda Conner Lambeck, “City events to protest Zimmerman verdict” *Stamford Advocate*, July 15, 2013.

Zimmerman. These churches are part the BMBC and include, Union Baptist Church, Faith Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, East End Missionary Baptist Church and Messiah Missionary Baptist Church, to name a few (see illustrations). The rallies were hailed as efforts to “Save our Babies”<sup>28</sup> and were to be held in the spirit of love, justice and community as a backdrop to bring about racial healing. One feature of these rallies that differs from the New Britain rallies described in this project was the creation and delivery of a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder requesting he bring federal civil rights charges against Mr. Zimmerman. According to an interview with Louise Jefferson and Mattie Booze, writing a letter to Attorney General Holder was not something they thought of doing, but were in favor of adding their name to it.<sup>29</sup>

*The First New Britain Rally: July 27, 2013*

On the day of the rally the weather was very clear, warm and sunny. This researcher was the second person to arrive at the New Britain Superior Court. With great anticipation for the protest rally to begin, the crowd started arriving about 8:45 a.m. By 9:30 a.m. there were approximately one hundred seventy-five persons present. Many people at the rally carried signs prepared by the CFEJ with slogans described earlier. Members of the BMBC wore hoodies and carried bags of Skittles and cans of Arizona Iced Tea as a sign of solidarity. This action-step was in response to what Trayvon Martin was wearing and carrying on the night he was killed. The crowd was predominately African American, with perhaps about twenty-five Caucasians in attendance. Both black

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Mattie Booze and Louise Jefferson, interviewed by author, CFEJ, July 24, 2013.

and white participants shared in the enthusiasm of the day. During the protest rally about fifteen people walked through the event which was held on a public sidewalk. These persons did not participate in the rally. The ages represented ranged from six months to about eighty years old. The majority of the participants in the rally were members of the BMBC and the CFEJ. The *New Britain Herald* recorded the rally and put a video of the rally on its website.<sup>30</sup>

The rally program consisted of seven impromptu speakers, including this researcher (see summary in Appendix E). A representative from the Mayor's office Bridgette Brown, Community Affairs Liaison read a statement from Mayor Tim O'Brien, who was not present. Among the other speakers was an eleven-year old African American girl who spoke about wanting to be friends with blacks and whites. During the rally, there was some counter-protesting going on. About five or six disparaging remarks were made by unknown persons who drove by the rally sight, shouting, "Nigger go home," and "Trayvon is scum." The emergence of hate-language at what was otherwise a peaceful demonstration was a shock to this author. Though there was concern with whether a riot would break out, it was refreshing to witness the maturity level of the participants at the rally who did not respond to the aforementioned unkind words.

*The Second New Britain Rally: August 1, 2013.*

The next rally was held on August 1, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. This rally was held on the plaza of the State Supreme Court in New Britain in collaboration with the New Britain chapter of the NAACP and the CFEJ. Although this rally was more formal than the first,

---

<sup>30</sup> George Zimmerman verdict Trayvon Martin, *New Britain Herald*, July 27, 2013. fcp, accessed February 15, 2014 <http://newbritainherald.com/nbhtv>



the speakers (see summary in Appendix F) made unprepared, impromptu comments. A program listing the speakers was distributed and the agenda was set by Ronald David, President of the New Britain chapter of the NAACP.

*Distractions over NAACP/CFEJ disagreement.* In contrast to the first rally, the focus of the second rally appeared diluted. Though this rally was intended to be a joint work between the CFEJ and the New Britain chapter of the NAACP, in the opinion of the present writer, the leaders in the New Britain chapter of the NAACP had little intention of collaboration and sought instead to run the entire rally as a showcase for the NAACP.

As in the case of the first rally, steps were taken to publicize the second rally. The present writer encouraged BMBC members from the Saint James Missionary Baptist pulpit the last three Sundays of July 2013 to attend the August 1 rally, in partnership with the NAACP. These announcements were followed up with emails and phone calls to members of Saint James Missionary Baptist church as a reminder to participate. The present writer recalls confusion from Saint James members who could not understand why the NAACP was not on board for the first rally and why there was a need for a second rally run by the NAACP. Suspicion of rivalry and competition, in the opinion of the present writer, created an unnecessary distraction. It is for this reason that researcher observations (see chapter 4) pertinent to the hypotheses of this study shall be confined to the first rally.

### **Statement of the Ministry Problem and Purpose of Research**

There is a ministry need to rededicate the BMBC's efforts to confront social injustices. The BMBC, since its inception in the 1700s and down through the years, has been involved with civil rights and equality for blacks. According to Fitts, "There was no

period in the twentieth century wherein Black Americans did not protest the injustices and inconsistencies of American democracy.”<sup>31</sup> This researcher seeks to examine data from current members of the BMBC to determine whether they have moved away from some of the organization’s historic core beliefs regarding the pursuit of social justice. It is very important that the BMBC does not abandon those who are most in need.

The purpose of this research is to measure congregants’ attitudes regarding the BMBC’s commitment to pursuing social justice. If there is indifference, we must understand its depth and basic nature before we can craft a strategy to reverse it. It is also important to ascertain how the BMBC may be more relevant in an urban environment. The BMBC members must understand their own responsibility to help others to achieve social justice in spite of what they are going through. The BMBC must help those who are unable to help themselves.

### **Model of Research, Hypotheses and Research Questions**

The present project is descriptive research. It seeks merely to describe the state of affairs. Although it does not purport to introduce any intervention to improve the state of affairs (i.e. experimental research), it intends that its findings serve as the basis for further discussion among BMBC leaders regarding possible interventions in the future.

The present study generated three sources of data for congregational perceptions: (1) A thirteen-question survey, the Perception of Social Justice Activism Survey (PSJA), administered to seventy-six congregants at the St James Missionary Baptist Church during the time of the New Britain Trayvon Martin rallies; (2) researcher observations at

---

<sup>31</sup> Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 270.

the first Trayvon Martin rally; and (3) interviews with twelve members of the BMBC in New Britain.

The researcher proposes three hypotheses to describe current perceptions of BMBC members toward the BMBC's pursuit of social justice as follows:

H1: *There is a basic foundational commitment to social justice in the BMBC, but there are indicators that suggest the strength of this commitment is questionable.*

H2: *Members of the BMBC are willing and able to take a prescribed response step when confronted with a social injustice symbol, like Trayvon Martin.*

H3: *There are differences between age groups in the way they conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice.*

Related to the first hypothesis are two research questions:

RQ1A: *Do the congregants have a personal commitment to social justice?* (This is in distinction from what the congregants believe about the commitment of the BMBC as a whole).

RQ1B: *Is there a "gap" between what congregants perceive to be the "ideal BMBC" and the "actual BMBC," with respect to social justice activism, between what they would like to see and what they do see?* Subscores in the PSJA allow for a direct comparison of these two perceptions (see chapter 3 discussion of the "instrument").

Related to the second hypothesis are the following two research questions:

RQ2A: *How many BMBC congregants attended the first New Britain rally (a prescribed response-step to a clear social injustice symbol)?*

RQ2B: *To what degree were the congregants passionate about the issues at the rally (the ethos of the rally)?*

Related to the third hypothesis are the following four research questions:

RQ3A: *How do Silent Generation congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?*

RQ3B: *How do Baby Boomer congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?*

RQ3C: *How do Generation X congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?*

RQ3D: *How do Generation Y congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?*

The eight research questions above will help structure the presentation of data findings in chapter 4 to support the three hypotheses.

### **Empirical Unknowns**

Responses to the PSJA survey were unknown. Also prior to the actual events, it was also unknown how many people would attend the two rallies and participate. Without any way to gauge, the researcher imagined that attendance at the first rally of about one hundred and fifty members of the BMBC would be a “good turnout.” Prior to the second rally planned for August 2, 2103, given the networking capability of the NAACP, the researcher imagined a good number of participants to be about five hundred people. It was also unknown what passion congregants would show at these rallies: would there be blank stares or would there be passion expressed through signage, chanting, and overall energy level? Because this researcher had never organized a rally prior to these two, it was unknown whether the efforts of the members of the BMBC and

CFEJ would have any lasting impact in measuring congregational perceptions regarding the Black Missionary Baptist Church's effectiveness in pursuing social justice.

The present writer has suspected that perceptions of social justice are different for different age groups within the BMBC though exactly how these differences expressed themselves was unknown. It was decided that inquiring about "action-steps" and discovering how each group conceived of such action-steps and articulating in their own words what "social justice involvement" looks like, would be a good way to elicit the differences. It was unknown how each age group would address that question.

### **Definition of Terms**

Social justice may be defined "as a state or doctrine of egalitarianism; a belief in human equality especially with respect to social, political and economic affairs."<sup>32</sup> This belief in human equality places a moral responsibility on the members of the BMBC to participate in social justice activism and to take up the causes of civil rights movement for its members. Therefore, it should be clear that "social justice" in this project means, more specifically, *racial* justice and the "pursuit of social justice" means *protesting against* instances of inequality under the law according to race (the outward manifestation of racial prejudice) and *applying political pressure* to those in power to implement change. "Effectiveness in pursuing social justice" therefore is defined in this study as "successfully facilitating" that protest and political pressure. In the BMBC, this means organizing and participating in public civil rights rallies and other events to alert the general public to the grave unfairness of institutionalized racism. Over the years,

---

<sup>32</sup> Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary.

there have been many individuals who have served as “symbols of social injustice,” such as James Byrd Jr., a black man beaten and dragged to death while chained to the back of a pick-up truck by three white men in Jasper, TX in 1998.<sup>33</sup> Another symbol of social injustice is Marissa Alexander, a black woman convicted in Jacksonville, FL of attempted murder during an August 2010 incident in which she fired a warning shot into the ceiling after being physically abused by her husband, Rico Gray against whom she had taken out an order of protection.<sup>34</sup> Trayvon Martin has similarly served as a “symbol of social injustice.”

The present researcher believes it is impossible to describe congregational attitudes toward social justice in the BMBC without resorting to distinctions in age. Observations will be presented in chapter 4 regarding participation at the two rallies with respect to age groups. Interview data in chapter 4 will also be presented with respect to age groups. The most convenient shorthand description for differing age groups are “generations.” The present study therefore divides participants and BMBC members into four main age groups according to Matt Rosenberg’s definitions:<sup>35</sup> (1) Generation X, who according to Rosenberg were born during the years 1965-1979; (2) Baby Boomers, who were born during the years 1946-1964; (3) Generation Y, who were born during the years 1980-2000; and (4) The Silent Generation, those who were born prior to 1946.

---

<sup>33</sup> Carol Marie Cropper, “Black Man Fatally Dragged in a Possible Racial Killing” *New York Times*, June 10, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Julia Dahl, “Fla. Woman gets 20 Years for ‘Warning Shot’”: Did she stand her ground? *CBS News*, May 16, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Matt Rosenberg, “Names of Generations” (About Education 2006). Rosenberg is a geography expert and former adjunct professor at California State University, Northridge.

## **Limitations and Assumptions of the Study**

There are limitations associated with each form of data the present project has attempted to collect. First, there are limitations associated with surveys. There is always the possibility that the participant misunderstands the verbiage of the question. As is the case with all surveys, we are reliant on self-reports which we assume are honest. A more severe limitation came with the concern to preserve anonymity, which drove the decision to not include a demographic question about age. The respondents of the survey are members where the writer of this project serves as Pastor as such there is the possibility they may want to hide their true (shameful) attitudes from their pastor if they are apathetic about social justice. This is a costly limitation in that the present researcher hopes to show differences in perception along the dividing lines of age (mainly in the interviews). With the shift in attitudes this author has seen over the past forty years or so in the BMBC as it relates to social justice this writer assumes many people are too busy with their own lives and do not get involved with social justice issues like they did during the civil rights era unless it affects them personally or their immediate family. When the respondents have an opportunity to answer with a degree of anonymity it is hopeful they will be honest in their answers and not just respond in a manner that is politically correct. The return rate on the survey, while relatively high, is nonetheless a percentage and not a complete inventory. Further, though the study concerns the BMBC, the researcher had immediate access to only one, the largest, of the four BMBC churches in New Britain., where he serves as the pastor. Additionally with the active membership of Second Baptist at 35 members, Peace Missionary Baptist Church also having an active membership of about 35 and True Vine having an active membership of 15 members the

rate of return would not have added greatly to the sample size obtained by Saint James to make the distribution of surveys to the other churches worthwhile. Second, there are limitations on researcher observations at the two Trayvon Martin rallies. The researcher was a speaker/organizer and may not have been free from distractions to make accurate observations. Further, there is a high degree of subjectivity when interpreting phenomena like attendance and chants and signage as indicators of attitudes and commitments. Finally, there are limitations associated with interviews. Since they were conducted by the present researcher, who is a pastor to the participants, one would have to assume the authority status of the interviewer had some effect in shaping the answers.

### **Theological and / Theological Framework**

There is a God given responsibility that, as children of God, we are accountable for making sure people are treated equally, regardless of the color of their skin. The Bible and the Christian tradition uphold social justice.

#### **Biblical Calls to Social Justice**

In the writings of the Prophet Isaiah, the church is commanded by God to minister to the needs of a broken society by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and visiting those in prison. In doing so, those in the BMBC will fulfill the commandment of God to proclaim liberty to the captives (Isaiah 61:1). In the book of Amos, the prophet declares “let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (Amos 5:25). Today, each member of the Black Missionary “church has to take a stand, and it has to be indignant. The Black Church has to be accountable to itself.<sup>36</sup>” Those who are members

---

<sup>36</sup> Gary. S. J. Smith, *Radical Compassion: Finding Christ in the Heart of the Poor* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 2002), 25.



of the BMBC must be leaders in the black community when it involves social justice issues. Hunter says, “To be a Christian is to be obliged to engage the world, pursuing God’s restorative purpose over all of life, individual and corporate, public and private.”<sup>37</sup> This obligation mimics what Jesus told his followers: to give drink to those who are thirsty, take in a stranger, clothe the naked and visit those who are in prison (Matthew 25:35-36).

The responsibility of believers is to be like Jesus. He cared about all people. In Matthew 6:28-31 we are reminded of how Christ cared for lilies of the field and how we, who are made in the image of God, are more valuable to him than lilies. It is in that frame of mind that we must understand we are all God’s creation and as such we must be our brother’s keeper.

#### Social Justice Themes Proclaimed by Christian Thinkers and Black Church Leaders

To further the biblical prophecy of Isaiah, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Dr. Ralph Abernathy formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).<sup>38</sup> Following the mandate of the prophet Isaiah, many members of the BMBC want to follow God’s commandments which state followers of Christ are to love one another and take care of the basic needs of mankind. Jesus said, “In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

---

<sup>37</sup> James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World; The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>38</sup> Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 283. Fitts describes its significance and impact: This organization “consisted of approximately one hundred southern clergymen who believed that civil rights leadership must be revitalized by churches and church leaders.”

Dr. John Perkins was a civil rights leader during the 1960s and he believed it was necessary to fight social injustice through a biblically based effort. According to Perkins “faith based efforts will lead to racial reconciliation.”<sup>39</sup> Dr. Perkins also believed “the system of segregation negatively affected both black and white people”<sup>40</sup> and he utilized interfaith efforts to overcome that system during the civil rights movement. Joel Carpenter in *Compassionate Evangelism* notes that Dr. Perkins

Deplores the historic involvement of the church in America with racism and the conspicuous responsibility of the evangelical community for perpetuating the personal attitudes and institutional structures that have divided the body of Christ along color lines when he noticed no white evangelicals participating in the civil rights struggle.<sup>41</sup>

Gary Smith’s, “Radical Compassion: Finding Christ in the Heart of the Poor” (2002) frames social justice issues for the Christian believer. He says, “The church has to take a stand, and it has to be indignant” about the needs of society. Specifically the church “has to fight those who, by actions of others scoff at the fundamental rights to protect the life and dignity of every person by providing the conditions where that life and that dignity are not undermined.”<sup>42</sup> According to Pinn and Pinn, in the aftermath of Dr. King’s assassination, the black church, in part, has carried on the tradition of pursuing

---

<sup>39</sup> John M Perkins, interview by Charles Marsh, April 22, 2009: “Let Justice Roll Down.” University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Joel A Carpenter, “Compassionate Evangelicalism” *Christianity Today* 47, (2003): 40-42.

<sup>42</sup> Gary. S. J. Smith, *Radical Compassion: Finding Christ in the Heart of the Poor* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 2002), 25.

social justice by providing childcare, job training, housing and other educational opportunities to those who are less fortunate.<sup>43</sup>

Some of the themes in black theology (see section on James H. Cone in the literature review in chapter 2) are foundational to this project. These scholars within the BMBC are considered Christian Black Liberationists. Consider Cornell West, who according to Anthony Bradley, worked to incorporate Marxist thought into the black church; and Jeremiah Wright, Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, who has stated that black theology seeks to plumb the black condition in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, so that the black community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievements of black humanity.<sup>44</sup> According to Cone, "One of the tasks of black theology is to analyze the nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ in light of the experience of oppressed blacks. No theology is Christian theology unless it arises from oppressed communities and interprets Jesus' work as that of liberation."<sup>45</sup> Modern day preachers understand black theology as primarily a theology of and for black people who share the common belief that racism will be destroyed only when black people decide to say in word and deed "we ain't gonna stand any more for this."<sup>46</sup> According to the Dyrness' article in the *Global Dictionary of Theology*, black theology has been inspired by the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa and its North American

---

<sup>43</sup> Anne H. Pinn and Anthony B. Pinn, "Black Church History" (Minneapolis, MN: 55440, 2002), 134.

<sup>44</sup> Anthony Bradley, "The Marxist Roots of Black Liberation Theology" *Action Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty*, April 2, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1970), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 117.

counterparts, while the antecedents of black theology may be traced back to earlier African protest against European hegemony. Black theology fulfilled a critical and empowering role for black Christians both within the church and in the broader society.<sup>47</sup>

Another foundational idea to this study is the way the black church has been more than a religious institution for the black community, but also a social institution. The black church's mission was to primarily minister to the soul and it also served as a host for secular functions which placed them squarely in the center of black social life. Myers', *Walking with the Poor*, says "it is necessary for the Black Church to meet people where they are if they are not to 'become nameless.'"<sup>48</sup> This has always been the identity for the black community.

Since its inception, the black church has been an organizational site for social and political activities, and a center for economic development and growth. As microcosms of the larger society, black churches provided an environment free of oppression and racism for African Americans. It was in the black church African Americans were consistently exposed to social, political, and economic opportunities which could be sought and had by all members equally. The representational structure of African American churches confirmed black preachers as both religious and community leaders. The sermons of many black preachers expounded messages of Christianity to draw comparisons to the daily experiences of African Americans. Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes Jr. in *Whose Gospel*

---

<sup>47</sup> William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkkainen, "Global Dictionary of Theology" in *South African Theology, 1.3 Black Theology* (Illinois, Inter-Varsity Press), 842.

<sup>48</sup> Bryant L. Myers, *Walking With The Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 57.

reminds us “the whole of creation is waiting to be set free from its bondage of decay and to obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”<sup>49</sup>

According to Ayers and Williams, authors of *To Serve This Present Age: Social Justice Ministries in the Black Church*, the church has a mandate to “focus on basic causes of oppression, inequality, and disenfranchisement. The church has to empower people to take initiatives in ways that are positive and constructive.”<sup>50</sup>

By being actively involved in pursuing social justice, young people as well as those who are more aged need to understand they may be the light in the world which brings about change. Byars stated “young adults said that what they are missing in worship was not so much a certain type of music or a certain way of proceeding, but rather passion.”<sup>51</sup> The BMBC must follow God’s mandate to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). The members of BMBC have a God given responsibility to stand up for those who cannot stand up or speak up for themselves. The word of God says, “Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:9). The word of God teaches believers to “bring good news to the poor” (Isaiah 61:1). This is what many who were involved with the BMBC did during the civil rights era. They shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with the poor. Today, the leadership of

---

<sup>49</sup> James A. Forbes Jr., *Whose Gospel: A Guide to Progressive Protestantism* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 145.

<sup>50</sup> Danielle L. Ayers and Reginald W. Williams Jr., *To Serve This Present Age: Social Justice Ministries in the Black Church* (Valley Forge: February 5, 2013), 5.

<sup>51</sup> Ronald P. Byars, *The Future of Protestant Worship: Beyond the Worship Wars* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 53.

the church must make bringing good news to the poor a priority. Members of the BMBC must continue to fight for social justice or victims may feel as if they do not matter.

It is imperative for the BMBC to be on the forefront of social justice. Protesting, petitioning, and uniting with others who have been victims is a way to confront the issues of injustice which plague people of color. There is a lot of work to do to end the disparity between races. To this end, the BMBC believes the verdict by the jury in the George Zimmerman trial shows persistent racism still afflicts the nation five years after it elected its first African American president. According to the Rev. Al Sharpton, we must “turn chants into change.”<sup>52</sup> The days of just waiting for change must end. Members of the BMBC must be agents of change.

### **Summary**

Although many members of the BMBC understand and believe social justice is important, there are just as many members who may not understand the struggles their fore-parents went through. Many may not appreciate what it means to be involved in social justice issues and subsequently their attitudes may reflect indifference. The attitude of indifference can only be corrected if it is understood. With a greater appreciation for the injustices done to black people and the continuing struggles they face then and only then will the BMBC move forward. Knowing about and recognizing possible declines in commitment to social justice is paramount. Leaders in the BMBC must continually reach out to those who want change to insure the struggles and gains of the civil rights era are not lost. There must be initiatives to reach the youth and empower them to lead their

---

<sup>52</sup> Alex Altman, “Ferguson Wrestles with What to do Next” *Time*, August 26, 2014.

peers to activism as they pursue social justice. There has been too much blood shed down through history to let it all go to waste.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review will acquaint the reader with sources that inform various aspects of the present study. The reader should know about: (1) the culture of protest against social injustice in the early black church; (2) social justice themes in black preaching and black worship; (3) The Black Missionary Baptist Church's involvement in the civil rights movement; (4) the thoughts of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., (5) the thoughts of Dr. James H. Cone; and (6) the significance of the Trayvon Martin killing to the black church.

### Literature on the Culture of Protest against Social Injustice in the Early Black Church

Two books on the history of the black church in America are important for providing background information to this study: Ann and Anthony Pinn's 2002 work *The Fortress: Introduction to Black Church History*<sup>53</sup> and Leroy Fitts' 1985 work, *A History of Black Baptists*.<sup>54</sup> Both books document how the realities of white racism and black slavery present in America in its colonial period were important forces that lead to the gradual emergence of the black church separating from the white church.<sup>55</sup> Dr. James

---

<sup>53</sup> Anne H. Pinn, and Anthony B. Pinn. *Fortress introduction to Black Church History* (Minneapolis, MN: Pilgrim Press, 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985).

<sup>55</sup> Pinn, 1-5; Fitts, 45.



Cone's 1969, *Black Theology and Black Power*, describes how historically the black church became a "home base for revolution,"<sup>56</sup> a center for "the black encounter with the structure of white racism, with the full intention of destroying its menacing power."<sup>57</sup> Bearing in mind Dr. Cone's well-known attitudes on violence, it is still useful to know of the slave revolts Cone documents, like the 1831 revolt led by Nat Turner, a Baptist preacher and slave, which serve as part of the heritage of protest in the black church.

### **Literature on the Social Justice Themes in Black Preaching and Black Worship**

It is critical to note that social justice is more than an activity or ministry task of the black church in America—it is embedded in its lifeblood, in its preaching and in its worship. First, in regard to black preaching, Fitts describes what he sees as a "theological awakening" among black preachers in the 1800s,<sup>58</sup> in which liberation from white oppression emerged as a central vision in the black Christian consciousness. Along these lines, books on black preaching recognize the importance of majoring in social justice themes. Gregory Howard, Pastor of the Union Branch Baptist Church in Chesterfield, VA, and author of the 2010 work, *Black Sacred Rhetoric*, describes how black thoughts on racism could be "liberating, comforting and hopeful and is still capable of moving hearts and minds of modern day listeners as well as bridging the generational gap between congregants."<sup>59</sup> Samuel Dewitt Proctor's 1994 volume *The Certain Sound of the*

---

<sup>56</sup> James H. Cone, *Black Theology & Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), 92.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 136.

<sup>58</sup> Fitts, *History*, 43.

<sup>59</sup> Gregory M. Howard, *Black Sacred Rhetoric: The Theology and Testimony of Religious Folk Talk* (Memphis, TN: BoarderStone Press, 2010), 1.

*Trumpet* similarly says, “Preaching at its best will begin where the people are and educate them in the possibilities of refined and improved human relations.”<sup>60</sup> Crawford’s 1995 book, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching*, describes how black preaching allows the hearer to find the bridge between the individual’s voice and that of the community. This, he says, will allow blacks to focus on the social justice issues of the day.<sup>61</sup>

Second, in regard to black worship, Porch, Garcia and Tribble’s 2002 article on “Diverse Worship Styles,” embodies the need for the soul to be free. There are also common elements in black worship in the midst of this diversity. According to Porch, Garcia and Tribble’s, “Religion in America has always been a lively affair. This is characterized by hand clapping, foot stomping, handkerchief waving and fiery preaching. This lively affair is also heard through the hymns such as ‘Blessed Assurance,’ ‘Near the Cross’ and ‘Pass Me Not.’ These songs, as well as the unique style of worship, reach the deepest parts of the heart and soul of those seeking justice and freedom.”<sup>62</sup> In an article on *African Background Theology*, Dyrness and Karkkainen state “the purpose of these unique styles of worship is to not deny elements inherited from the black African religious experience, but to accompany and motivate, from a spirituality of commitment and social movements, blacks in their struggle against racism, in society and in ecclesial

---

<sup>60</sup> Samuel D. Proctor, *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994), 15.

<sup>61</sup> Evans E. Crawford, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 77.

<sup>62</sup> James M. Porch, Jimmy Garcia III, and Sherman R. Tribble, “Diverse Baptist Worship Styles: A Panel” *Baptist and History* 37, no. 3 (Summer-Fall 2002): 26-34.

spaces; to reflect with and support blacks as they rescue their identity.”<sup>63</sup> Gordon Lathrop’s 1993 *Liturgical Theology*<sup>64</sup> offers the pattern “Book (Bible), Bath (baptism) and Meal (Lord’s Supper),” which characterizes black worship and reinforces the notion of forgetting about present struggles and looking to the future. God would bring his people out victoriously. As Cone put it, endurance now, and liberty later.<sup>65</sup>

### **Literature Related to the Black Missionary Baptist Church’s Involvement in the Civil Rights Movement**

For information pertaining to how the Black Missionary Baptist Church first organized politically, one should consult N. H. Pius’ 1911 work, *An Outline of Baptist History*.<sup>66</sup> This work describes an 1895 meeting attended by more than 2000 clergy in Atlanta, GA, in which the three largest conventions of the day (the Baptist Foreign Missionary Convention, the American National Baptist Convention, and the National Baptist Educational Convention) merged to form the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America. “The American National Baptist Convention which sought to look after the educational interest, that the interest of the Kingdom of God requires that the several bodies above named should unite in one body.”<sup>67</sup> This merger brought the northern and southern black Baptist churches together and represented at that time,

---

<sup>63</sup> William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkkainen, “Global Dictionary of Theology” African Background Theology (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>64</sup> Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 40.

<sup>65</sup> James H. Cone, *Black Theology & Black Power* (Orbis Books, 1997), 105.

<sup>66</sup> N. H. Pius, *An Outline of Baptist History, U.S.A.* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1911).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 65.

greater political organization.<sup>68</sup> By the time of the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s, black churches were well-established social and political power bases for African Americans. With over three thousand member churches, the National Baptist Convention's presence sanctioned them with political power. This power helped lead black people in the movement for civil rights.

Several sources are valuable for the civil rights movement itself. For educational purposes, the PBS documentary *Eyes on the Prize* is excellent, along with the companion volume by Juan Williams.<sup>69</sup> For an oral history, see Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer's, *Voices of Freedom* (1990).<sup>70</sup> Hampton and Fayer document black reaction to racially motivated violence during this era, the most infamous of which was the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL on September 16, 1963.<sup>71</sup> The strong black reaction to the Trayvon Martin case is in part due to sensitivity over racially motivated violence. Also valuable is Curtiss Paul DeYoung's, *The Role of the Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement: Justice, Peace and Reconciliation*.<sup>72</sup> We should

---

<sup>68</sup> The merger is also documented in Fitts, *History*, 43.

<sup>69</sup> "Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1964" (first aired on PBS, January 21, 1987). Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1964* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987).

<sup>70</sup> Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990). The bombing and burning of Black churches during this time translated into an attack upon the core of civil rights activism, as well as upon the larger Black religious community.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* Four children killed in the attack, several others injured, and a community's sense of security within their church was forever traumatized. The children who died in the bombing were Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Addie Mae Collins and Cynthia Wesley. This act signified the depths to which racial hatred could fall. Like many other churches bombed before and after, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was a black church. Unfortunately, this was not an isolated incident. However, these, racially motivated arsons did not destroy the souls of Black communities.

<sup>72</sup> Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *The Role of the Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement: Justice, Peace & Reconciliation The Example of Martin Luther King* (Guadeloupe. January 2011).

note how DeYoung documents the use of peaceful rallies as a common form of protest, similar to the rally which serves as a subject in this project. Fitts remains a valuable source for historical information on the civil rights movement and has a good summary of Dr. King's "March on Washington" on August 28, 1963.<sup>73</sup>

One should also consult sources that document the work of specific civil rights leaders like Adam Clayton Powell Sr.,<sup>74</sup> who, at the age of twenty-two, led six thousand marchers in New York to protest the barring of five black physicians from the staff of Harlem Hospital. Later, as a congressman, Powell famously declared, "The question of civil rights is no longer the problem of Negro people—it is the problem of all people of the United States of America."<sup>75</sup> Other civil rights leaders of note were John L. Scott, author of *Civil Rights Voice for the Oppressed: The Story of Rev. John L. Scott*,<sup>76</sup> and John Reynolds, whose work is summarized in his memoir *The Fight for Freedom: A Memoir of My Years in the Civil Rights Movement*.<sup>77</sup> Williams also documents the contributions of the Rev. James Lawson, who was instrumental in teaching churches passive resistance and nonviolence through workshops. Williams later led the efforts of

---

<sup>73</sup> Fitts, *History*, 286.

<sup>74</sup> Fitts, *History*, is one place. Another civil rights leader is Adam Clayton Powell, Sr.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 272.

<sup>76</sup> John L. Scott, *Civil Rights Voice for the Oppressed: The Story of Reverend John L. Scott* (New York: Beckham Publications Group, 2013).

<sup>77</sup> John Reynolds, *The Fight For Freedom: A Memoir of My Years in the Civil Rights Movement* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2012).

the sit-in movement at segregated food counters at Woolworth's Department store in Nashville, TN.<sup>78</sup>

### **Literature Related to the Thought of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

There are many sources that document the thoughts of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his approach to social justice during the civil rights movement. One could argue that Rev. Dr. King's influence is best conceived through his speeches, the greatest of which, the "I Have a Dream" speech, is discussed thoroughly by Kukatani.<sup>79</sup> Rev. Dr. King was the local pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL. He and other clergy from the south who were fed up with the injustices done to blacks decided to call for a bus boycott in Montgomery on December 5, 1955. Kenneth Hare's *They Walked To Freedom 1955-1956: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* describes the actions of Rosa Parks and the aftermath of her being arrested for not giving up her seat to a white man on the bus.<sup>80</sup> This is an excellent book, along with Peter B. Levy's, *Let Freedom Ring: A Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement*,<sup>81</sup> which offers information about the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Montgomery bus boycott. The success of the Montgomery bus boycott helped vault Rev. Dr. King to national prominence.

---

<sup>78</sup> Juan Williams, "Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1964 (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 1987), 126.

<sup>79</sup> Michiko Kakutani, "The Lasting Power of Dr. King's Dream Speech" *New York Times*, August 27, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Kenneth M. Hare, *They Walked To Freedom 1955-1956: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* (Champaign, IL: Spotlight Press, 2005).

<sup>81</sup> Peter B. Levy, *Let Freedom Ring: A Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992).

To witness the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Rev. Dr. King's philosophy of bringing change through non-violence, one should consult Gadadhara Pandit Dasa, who states "Dr. King and Gandhi were people who gained tremendous inspiration from their faith traditions and were able to perform tremendous feats of courage through the implantation of non-violence."<sup>82</sup> Rev. Dr. King's own words<sup>83</sup> explain his belief that political and social change could come about by harnessing the power of love: "The nonviolent resister is just as opposed to the evil that he is standing against as the violent resister, but he resists without violence."<sup>84</sup> In his eyes, all were equal in God's sight. This concept, according to King, allows the "nonviolent resister to not seek to humiliate or defeat the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding."<sup>85</sup> One final quote from Rev. Dr. King is worth noting:

"True non-violence is not unrealistic submission to evil power. It is rather a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love, in the faith that it is better to be the recipient of violence than the inflictor of it, since the latter only multiplies the existence of violence and bitterness in the universe, while the former may develop a sense of shame in the opponent, and thereby bring about a transformation and change of heart."<sup>86</sup>

It is this philosophy of non-violence that continues today in the BMBC in its protest of the Trayvon Martin case.

---

<sup>82</sup> Gadadhara Pandit Dasa, "Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi: The Liberating Power of Non-Violence," The Blog, Huffington Post, entry posted January 21, 2104, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gadadhara-pandit-dasa/martin-luther-king-jr-and\\_3\\_b\\_4631610.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gadadhara-pandit-dasa/martin-luther-king-jr-and_3_b_4631610.html) (accessed January 21, 2014).

<sup>83</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Power of Non-Violence* (January 4, 1957).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project. "My Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" (September 1, 1958), 479.

## Literature Related to the Thought of James H. Cone

Rev. Dr. King's vision on non-violence differed greatly from that of James H. Cone, Ph.D. Dr. Cone was a professor of systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary and his most important work is *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969).<sup>87</sup> While Dr. King believed freedom came from loving one another, Dr. Cone believed "Black Power means complete emancipation of black people from white oppression by whatever means black people deem necessary."<sup>88</sup> This will free so called "powerless black men whose existence is threatened daily by the insidious tentacles of white power."<sup>89</sup> Dr. Cone agrees this is particularly true seeing black and white "relate not to skin pigmentation, but to one's attitude and action toward the liberation of the oppressed black people from white racism."<sup>90</sup> In his writing, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, Dr. Cone states in order to grow as a people "there must be a spiritual revolution which erupts in the cultural and political contexts of the African American community."<sup>91</sup> According to scholar Ron Rhodes, Dr. Cone believes "God is working for the deliverance of oppressed blacks in twentieth century America. Because God is helping oppressed blacks and has identified with them. God Himself is spoken of as 'black.'"<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> James H. Cone, *Black Theology & Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>89</sup> James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*. (Philadelphia, PA: J. P. Lippencott, 1970), 32.

<sup>90</sup> Nyameko Pityana, *What is Black Consciousness? Black Theology: The South African Voice*, ed. Basil Moore (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1973), 63.

<sup>91</sup> James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 154.

<sup>92</sup> Ron Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience" *Christian Research Journal* (Spring 1991): 27.



The liberationist stance of Dr. Cone is the oppositional counterpoint to the non-violent stance of Dr. King in the BMBC. While Dr. King's position regarding social justice was one of non-violence, Dr. Cone saw the need for social justice as a revolution. This revolution must "aim at the substitution of a new system for one adjudged to be corrupt, rather than corrective within the existing system."<sup>93</sup> Dr. Cone is worth noting for the literature review for this project on social justice, but his thoughts do not figure prominently in the life or outlook of the BMBC or in the Trayvon Martin protest rallies.

### **Literature Related to the Significance of Trayvon Martin to the Black Church**

The Trayvon Martin case was a national event covered by the national media. One may consult a July 21, 2013 *USA Today* article to see the cities (100 in total) in which solidarity rallies were held. These cities included, Indianapolis, IN, Miami, FL, Washington, DC, Asheville, NC, New York, NY and New Britain, CT, to name a few.<sup>94</sup>

The July 14, 2013 *Huffington Post* describes "Hoodie Sunday" in churches across the country.<sup>95</sup> The article speaks of Rev. Tony Lee of the Community of Hope Church outside of Washington, DC, who requested members of his pastoral staff to wear hoodies to the Sunday service on July 14, 2013.<sup>96</sup> Also relevant is Benjamin Bowman's dissertation, which analysis of newspaper representations of such protests should caution

---

<sup>93</sup> James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969). 136.

<sup>94</sup> Steph Solis, Molly Vorwerck, Jordan Friedman, and John Bacon, "Justice for Trayvon" rallies in 100 cities across USA" *USA Today*, July 21, 2013.

<sup>95</sup> Paul Brandeis Raushenbush, "Trayvon Martin 'Not Guilty' Verdict Sparks Hoodie Sunday at Black Churches" *Huffington Post*, July 14, 2013.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* 1.

blacks against reinforcing negative stereotypes in the process of trying to do good.<sup>97</sup>

Bowman also alerts the reader to the more creative initiatives some churches have taken in response to the Trayvon Martin shooting. Rev. Mike McBride of The Way Christian Center Church introduced a new organization called “Lifelines to Healing,” Reverend McBride has partnered with “People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO), an organization committed to ending gun violence and understanding gun policy. It also targets the “Stand Your Ground” laws, which, according to Reverend McBride, are “largely used against African Americans.”<sup>98</sup>

Finally, a July 14, 2013 *New York Times* article<sup>99</sup> describes the response from other clergy to the Zimmerman verdict. Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock, Senior Pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta said notably “Trayvon Benjamin Martin is dead because he and other black boys and men like him are not seen as a person, but a problem.”<sup>100</sup>

A final subcategory of literature for the Trayvon Martin case concerns what has become known as the “Broken Windows Policing” theory, which has unfairly targeted blacks and minorities. The theory, which was first introduced in an *Atlantic* article by

---

<sup>97</sup> Benjamin Bowman, *Rioters and Protesters, Hoodies and Children: Analyzing Newspaper Representations of Young People during the Riots*. (MA diss., University of Bath, 2011). “The wearing of masks and hoods is discursively constructed as a distinct trait, and not a clothing choice, characteristic to youths as a nation, particularly considering the nominalization of the “hooded youth” – hooded being a characteristic of the youth himself – as opposed to a person depicted in the process of wearing a mask which occurs more often for other categories of people such as looters.”

<sup>98</sup> Michael McBride, “Now is the time for comprehensive action to reduce gun violence” *PICO National Network*, July 13, 2013.

<sup>99</sup> Adam Nagourney, “Prayer, Anger and Protest Greet Verdict in Florida Case” *New York Times*, July 14, 2013.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

James Q Wilson and George Kelling, says that an environment of disorder (broken windows) breeds crime.<sup>101</sup> Sam Roberts wrote a *New York Times* article addressing the problem of “Broken Windows Policing.”<sup>102</sup>

### **Literature Related to White Police Officers’ Unfair Treatment of Black Men**

According to Matthew Whitaker, history professor and director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy at Arizona State University, “(Ferguson, MO) is just the latest reminder that the American criminal justice system does not treat blacks and whites the same—and that young black men in particular are often killed with impunity”<sup>103</sup> The race-based pattern of behavior whereby blacks are killed by white officers is repeated over and over in many of our cities in the United States. In a NY Times article Hamid and Benjamin Mueller compiled a list of some of the most notable deaths since 1990 of blacks and Hispanics that did not lead to criminal charges and fewer resulted in convictions.<sup>104</sup> These include, but are not limited to Jose (Kiko) Garcia; killed July 3, 1992, Sean Bell; killed November 25, 2008, Amadou Diallo; killed February 4, 1999 and Eric Garner; killed July 17, 2014. Incidents like these have caused according

---

<sup>101</sup> George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson. “Broken Windows: The police and neighborhood safety” *The Atlantic*, March 1, 1982.

<sup>102</sup> Sam Roberts, “Author of ‘Broken Windows’ Policing Defends His Theory” *New York Times*, August 10, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Ray Sanchez, “ Why Ferguson touched a raw, national nerve” *CNN*, November 29, 2014

<sup>104</sup> Hamid and Benjamin Mueller, “Fatal Police Encounters in New York City” *NY Times*, December 3, 2014

to a 2013 Pew Research survey to report 70 percent of black Americans believe they are treated less fairly than whites in their dealing with police. Similarly 68 percent of blacks say this same unjust treatment extends to the court system.<sup>105</sup> For reasons like these the BMBC interprets and has the perception of racial injustice in killing of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown. It appears their lives did not matter because they were killed by white people who were not held responsible.

### **Summary**

The present literature review was intended to acquaint the reader with sources that serves as a backdrop to the present study. One cannot truly understand or appreciate the black church's Trayvon Martin protest without knowing the history of racist attitudes rooted in black slavery and the black church's history of protest against racial injustice. The current BMBC leadership views the BMBC as descended from the vision and leadership of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the present researcher has an interest in discovering the degree to which this view of the BMBC among its congregants remains strong.

---

<sup>105</sup> Elahe Izadi, "Seven in 10 Black Americans say the Criminal Justice System Treats Them Unfairly" The Washington Post, August 16, 2014

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The writer of this paper will gather data on measuring congregational perceptions regarding the Black Missionary Baptist Church's effectiveness in pursuing social justice. As stated in chapter 1, the researcher chose three methods to generate data for this study: (1) a survey (the "Perception of Social Justice Activism" survey or PSJA); (2) researcher observations at two Trayvon Martin social justice rallies in New Britain, CT; and (3) interviews of BMBC members regarding social justice activism.

### **Data Source #1: The PSJA Survey**

#### Distribution and Collection of the Surveys

On July 13, 2013 George Zimmerman was acquitted in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin.<sup>106</sup> In light of this verdict, the present researcher, who serves as the pastor of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church, decided to create and conduct a survey to measure congregational perceptions about the BMBC's effectiveness in pursuing social justice (see the "Perception of Social Justice Activism" survey or PSJA survey for the BMBC, Appendix A). The survey is designed for participants to report not only their own personal interest in social justice, but their attitudes toward how the BMBC responds

---

<sup>106</sup> Lizette Alvarez and Cara Buckley, "Zimmerman Is Acquitted in Trayvon Martin Killing" *New York Times*, July 13, 2013.

to cases of injustice regarding all people, like the “not guilty” verdict in the death of Trayvon Martin, which was fresh in their minds at the time of the survey.

On Sunday, August 4, 2013, the researcher announced during the regular morning worship at Saint James Missionary Baptist Church that there would be a survey given to members of the BMBC regarding social justice. The members who would be given a survey would be those persons who were eighteen and older, and have their name listed on the membership rolls kept in the normal course of business. Those present were informed that the survey would be part of the researcher’s doctoral dissertation that said surveys would be passed out during service on Sunday, August 11, 2013. Instructions were also given to those present to return the completed surveys by mail in the self-addressed stamped envelope accompanying the survey by no later than Saturday, August 31, 2013. To insure that only BMBC church members returned the completed surveys, care was taken to make sure only members meeting the aforementioned criteria as were given surveys.

On Sunday, August 11, 2013 the researcher requested the deacons of Saint James to pass out the surveys on social justice to all the adults over the age of eighteen who were present in service that day. Seventy five persons received surveys that day and one person who was present in church on August 4, 2013, but not on the day the surveys were passed out requested his survey be mailed to him. One of the deacons made sure his survey was mailed immediately after service. A total of seventy-six surveys was given to members of the BMBC. In a desire to have the respondents remain anonymous, the researcher did not request any demographic information from the respondents. Forty-three people returned the survey, for a 57% return rate.

## **Data Source #2: Researcher Observation at the Trayvon Martin Rally in New Britain**

### Announcement of the Two Rallies

During the morning service on July 14, 2013 at Saint James Missionary Baptist Church, the author of this paper spoke about the verdict in the George Zimmerman case and how unjust the author felt this verdict was. This writer felt it was important for the members of the BMBC to understand the urgency of coming together to protest by rallying and marching against injustice in response to the not guilty verdict. During the announcement the author used the quote by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”<sup>107</sup> to emphasize the importance of everyone coming to the rallies to support the need for change.

Additionally, on Sunday, July 14, 2013 the author announced to the Saint James Missionary Baptist Church congregation that the CFEJ had organized a protest rally to be held on Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman. A similar announcement was made on the last three Sundays in July in support of the rally on August 1, 2013. The message the researcher wished to communicate to the Saint James members on July 14, 2013 was that black people had suffered yet another injustice. The legal system had let them down once again. There had been another black boy killed and no one was going to be held accountable. It was time to unite for a common cause to fight injustice. The researcher issued a call to come out and bring friends and family members to support this cause. “Tomorrow it may be your son,” was one line from this

---

<sup>107</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter From Birmingham Jail” April 16, 1963.

announcement. The researcher challenged the members to show up to the rallies in large numbers.

### Researcher Observations at the Two Rallies

The present researcher believed the attendance and enthusiasm level of BMBC members at the two Trayvon Martin rallies would provide some “data” regarding perceptions of and commitment to social justice. The current researcher was present at both rallies, and made it a point to make personal observations regarding BMBC participation at different phases of the rallies: before, during and after. Observations from only the first rally will serve for this study, which will be reported in chapter 4. “Notes” on the second rally will be reported in chapter 4, but as mentioned in chapter 1, distracting circumstances may have skewed the researcher’s observations of the BMBC’s commitment to social justice and therefore data from the second rally is not considered useful and will be omitted.

### **Data Source #3: The Interviews**

#### Recruitment of Participants

The present researcher chose a number of interview candidates and contacted them by phone, explaining the intention of the interview. In the perception of the present researcher, the candidates all shared the following common characteristics: a knowledge and understanding of injustice issues relating to people of color, and personal experiences with injustice.



## Description of Participants and the Location of the Interviews

The present writer chose twelve participants, summarized in Table 1 below.

(Participants 1-3), born prior to 1946, two males and one female were the oldest; they were the Silent Generation; (participants 4-6), born 1946-1964, were the second oldest group the Baby Boomers; the Generation X group, born 1965-1979 (participants 7-9), were the third oldest; and the Generation Y group, born 1980-2000, three females, were the youngest. The interview participants chosen by this author all have higher levels of education because this author believed they would be objective in their responses and their answers would reflect their true understanding on level of participation of the BMBC members as it relates to social justice. Other demographic information on the interview participants is summarized in Table 1:

### *1. Participant Demographic Information.*

Participant #	Generation	Gender	Race	Position of Responsibility	Level of Education
1	Silent	Male	African American	Pastor	Doctorate
2	Silent	Male	African American	Trustee	Bachelors of Science
3	Silent	Female	African American	Choir Ministry	Bachelors of Science
4	Baby Boomer	Male	African American	Technician	Bachelors of Science
5	Baby Boomer	Female	African American	Pastor's Aide	Associate's in Science
6	Baby Boomer	Female	African American	Assistant	Master's in Business
7	Generation X	Male	African American	Director	Master's in Education

Participant #	Generation	Gender	Race	Position of Responsibility	Level of Education
8	Generation X	Female	African American	Director	Juris Doctor
9	Generation X	Female	African American	Director	Master's in Education
10	Generation Y	Female	African American	Director	Master's in Sociology
11	Generation Y	Female	African American	Usher	Master's in Engineering
12	Generation Y	Female	African American	Assistant	Associate's In Science

All of the interviews were conducted in a conference room located on the grounds of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church and were recorded by the writer of this paper with permission from the participants. The interviews were conducted over a two week span of time: Participant 1 on August 12, 2013; participant 2 on August 12, 2013; participant 3 on August 14, 2013; participant 4 on August 12, 2013; participant 5 on August 19, 2013; participant 6 on August 22, 2013; participant 7 on August 21, 2013; participant 8 on August 14, 2013; participant 9 on August 16, 2013; participant 10 on August 20, 2013; participant 11 on August 14, 2013; and participant 12 on August 23, 2103. All twelve interviews were conducted at the approximate time of the two Trayvon Martin rallies.

#### Interview Questions

This researcher interviewed twelve persons from the BMBC to measure their perceptions on how effectively the BMBC pursues social justice. The researcher posed the same questions as those asked on the PSJA Survey. In addition, participants were invited to define “action-steps” that they believed they and the BMBC should take in

pursuing social justice. The researcher was particularly interested as to whether age played a role in the types of answers.

### **Summary**

The three sources of data were timed around the Trayvon Martin rallies so that questions regarding social justice which were asked of congregants in either the PSJA survey or the interviews would reflect congregational thinking at a moment when social justice was a topic of general conversation and a focus of church life.

## CHAPTER 4:

### DATA RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

Findings will be presented in the three categories corresponding to the sources of data described in chapter 3. As the data is presented, reference will be made to the three hypotheses and eight research questions discussed in chapter 1.

#### **Findings from Data Source #1: PSJA Survey**

The researcher used the Perceived Social Justice Activism or PSJA survey (Appendix A), a 13-question survey, to measure congregational perceptions of the Black Missionary Baptist Church's (BMBC's) effectiveness in pursuing social justice. Seventy-six surveys were given to members of the BMBC and forty-three were returned (see point results in Appendix C and pie graph results in Appendix D). The reader is invited to review the scoring system described in chapter 3 and summarized in Appendix C. As stated earlier, each question yields a score between 1 (low commitment) and 5 (high commitment).

#### The Individual PSJA Questions: Basic Foundational Commitment to Social Justice

Average scores on all thirteen questions were above 3.0 ("neutral"), which suggests the congregants are overall closer to high commitment (5.0) than to low commitment (1.0). At least, according to this survey, it is incorrect to say they are indifferent to social justice. This finding lends support to the first part of H1: *There is a basic foundational commitment to social justice in the BMBC.*

We now turn to the subscores on the PSJA that will support the second part of H1, the questionability of the strength of this commitment.

PSJA Subscores: Indicators that the Strength of Commitment is Questionable

Here, we restate our two Research Questions pertinent to H1: RQ1A: *Do the congregants have a personal commitment to social justice?*

RQ1B: *Is there a “gap” between what congregants perceive to be the “ideal BMBC” and the “actual BMBC,” with respect to social justice activism, between what they would like to see and what they do see*

Congregants’ Personal Commitment to Social Justice (PSJA, Q5, Q9 and Q11)

As stated in chapter 3, scores from Q5, Q9 and Q11 can be added to measure the respondent’s personal commitment to social justice. The average score on Q5, that social justice was not as important as it was fifty years ago, was 3.77. The tendency was to deny this, though the denial was not overwhelmingly strong (as if in the 4 range). In comparison, respondents averaged 4.28 on Q9, that Jesus was a champion of social justice. This strong response suggests that the congregants firmly believe social justice is a basic component of the Christian faith and of the gospel. On the other hand, the response to Q11, whether they are personally involved in social justice, was milder. The average score was only 3.47, with no less than eleven respondents checking ‘Disagree.’ Still, it is noteworthy that twenty-three respondents (over half) checked “agree” on being personally involved. The gap between 4.28 (about Jesus’ commitment to social justice) and 3.47 (about one’s personal involvement) should give us pause. Social justice is important to them, but they do not always make personal sacrifices to secure or pursue it.

This low self-report on personal involvement in social justice is one indicator that suggests the strength of congregants' commitment to social justice is questionable.

#### Congregants' Perception of the Ideal BMBC (PSJA, Q1, Q12 and Q13)

As stated earlier, Q1, Q12 and Q13 measure whether the BMBC ideally should be pursuing social justice. The average score for Q1, on whether the BMBC has a responsibility to be a leader in social justice, was very strong: seventeen "strongly agreed," twenty-four "agreed," no one "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed," and two said "don't know." The average score was 4.35. Further, the average score for Q12, on whether the BMBC needs a strong voice to lead in the fight for social justice, was 4.40, the highest average score on the entire survey. Forty-one of forty-three respondents either "agreed" or "strongly agreed." Clearly, congregants believe pursuing social justice is an essential mission of the BMBC. Finally, the average score on Q13, on whether spiritual excitement in the BMBC leads to greater participation in social justice issues, was also above 4, at 4.16. To summarize, some of the highest "commitment to social justice" scores came when respondents were asked about what they hope to see in the BMBC.

#### Congregants' Perception of the Actual BMBC (PSJA, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q7, Q8, Q10)

By contrast, scores were comparatively *lower* on questions related to what the BMBC *actually* does on issues of social justice. As stated earlier in chapter 3, six questions measure this. The average score on Q2, on whether the BMBC is actively involved in social justice, was 3.79 (twenty agreed, while six disagreed). Overall, most believe the BMBC is, but a sizable group does not. The response is more mixed and the perception of commitment is less clear. Likewise, the average score on Q3, on whether there has been an increase in social justice involvement over the past twenty years, was

3.70 (twenty-two agreed, eight disagreed). In addition, one of the lowest scores from the survey was on Q4, whether the BMBC meets the needs of the community: 3.49 (twenty-two agreed, nine disagreed, three strongly disagreed). Along the same lines, the average score to Q4, on whether Generation X and Generation Y persons in the BMBC are greatly involved in social justice, scored just 3.33 (nineteen agreed, thirteen disagreed). Clearly, a sizable number of congregants question whether young people in the BMBC are committed to social justice. No different is the average score to Q7, whether the BMBC is “effective” in championing causes for social justice: 3.53 (twenty-one agree, eight disagree). Consistent with this was the response to two reverse coded questions. The average score to Q8, whether the BMBC is “not relevant today” was 3.81 (thirty-one either disagreed or strongly agreed, eight either agreed or strongly agreed) and the average score to Q10, whether the BMBC has “no focus,” was 3.47 (twenty-three disagreed, eleven agreed).

A useful way to view the figures is to compare the average score for the “ideal BMBC” (Q1, Q12, Q13) and the “actual BMBC” (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q7, Q8, Q10). The composite average score for the perceived “ideal” is 4.30, whereas the composite score for the perceived ‘actual’ is 3.61. The numerical gap (0. 69 lower) suggests the words “disappointment” and “disillusionment” might better describe the perception of social justice in the BMBC, more than the words “indifference” or “disinterest.” This is a second indicator that the strength of the congregants’ commitment to social justice is questionable.

## ***Findings from the Data Source #2: The Trayvon Martin Rallies in New Britain***

The present researcher took note of BMBC members' responses in several forms: (1) responses to the announcement of the rallies; (2) attendance at the first rally; (3) the ethos at the first rally; and (4) post-rally responses.

### Researcher Observations at the First Rally

*Researcher Observations on the Response to the Announcement of the Rally (see description of the "Announcement of the Rallies" in chapter 1).*

Verbal responses in the service. On any given Sunday, the members of the local BMBCs in the New Britain area are normally laid back and quiet. The "witnessing" of such emotional response to the announcement was refreshing. The members of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church responded with clapping, and shouts of "Amen," "Glory," "Hallelujah," and "It's time for justice," and some were overheard saying, "We need a rally to wake people up." Many congregants said, "Pastor, thank you. It's time to stand up for our rights."

Volunteerism after the service. Immediately following the service, members of the BMBC started volunteering to help organize the two rallies. Three persons made approximately fifty signs for the rally. Many inquired as to what they could do to help make the rallies a success. During the next several days there were many phone conversations, and many one-on-one discussions about the rallies. From the conversations and promises to attend the rallies by different members of the BMBC there was a sense of great excitement.



*Researcher Observations about Approximate Attendance at the First Rally.*

Here we restate two research questions posed earlier: RQ1A: *Do the congregants have a personal commitment to social justice?* And RQ2A: *How many BMBC congregants attended the first New Britain rally?*

In answer to these research questions, the researcher’s observations regarding approximate attendance at the first rally (July 27, 2013) are summarized in Table 2 as follows:

*2. Researcher’s observations regarding approximate attendance at the first rally.*

Time	Phase of the Rally	Total number on hand	Gender Break-down	Age Breakdown	Members of St. James	Non-BMBC (Caucasian)
8:40 AM	Prior to start	10-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9:15 AM	Fifteen minutes in	175	125 female; 50 male	Silent Gen: 20 Baby Boomer: 60 Gen X: 25 Gen Y: 40 Gen Z: 15	130 (half of the total membership)	25

The attendance at this rally was pleasantly surprising. The researcher had never led a rally of any kind, and seeing this crowd served as a confirmation that the members of the BMBC care about social justice. Approximately one hundred and thirty people at the rally were members of Saint James Missionary Baptist Church. This represented just over half the membership of Saint James and was very encouraging, given that prior to the event the response was unknown (no precedents) and conceivably could have been low.

The researcher was also very happy to see the many Generation Z persons who attended the rally. A pleasant surprise was seeing about fifteen children from the New

Silent Generation otherwise known as Generation Z at the rally. Generation Z are people, according to Matt Rosenberg, who were born after the year 2000.<sup>108</sup> Even if they did not understand the reasons why they were present, they still participated carrying signs and making vocal chants calling for justice. It was also pleasant to see the persons from Generation Y (born 1980-2000) who attended the rally, considering that protesting through rally-attendance is less appealing to them than protest through social media (see Findings from Data Source #3: Interviews). It should be noted that Generation Y had the second greatest number of participants at the rally. Others who came out and participated in the rally, which was another pleasant surprise, were some of the older Silent Generation people (born prior to 1946). These were persons in their seventies and eighties who stood shoulder to shoulder with others during the rally.

The author of this paper was very dismayed to notice some of the more active people known for their position regarding civil rights and social justice were not present at the rally. These were some of the very same people who participated in organizing the rally, yet when it came time to protest they were not present, with no explanation. This observation supports the second half of H1: *There are indicators that suggest the strength of the basic foundational commitment to social justice is questionable.*

#### *Researcher Observations about the Ethos at the First Rally.*

Here, we restate a pertinent research question from chapter 1: RQ2B: *To what degree were congregants passionate about the issues at the rally?* The observations below would suggest that the answer is, to a high degree.

---

<sup>108</sup> Matt Rosenberg, "Names of Generations."

Preparations and signage. Some of this excitement was seen during the preparation for the rally. This preparation included making signs for the rally, whose slogans included “No Justice, No Peace,” “Justice for Trayvon, I Am Trayvon,” “Skittles, + Ice Tea =/= Death,” “Save Our Black Boys” and “Equal Justice under the Law.” During the preparation for the rally and the making of signs, the participants exhibited a sense of satisfaction and purpose. They were laughing and smiling while doing the work to get ready for the rally. The air was electrified with excitement (see photos in Appendix G).

Crowd noise level. There was no printed program to identify the order of speakers at the rally (see Appendix E) and the speakers merely took turns rallying the crowd and sharing the message of equality. To help amplify the message the speakers used a megaphone. This writer was one of the speakers at the rally. The researcher spoke about the laws of the United States are not equally applied as it relates to persons of color. This writer also detailed instances where blacks were adjudicated more harshly than non-blacks, e.g. blacks convicted of possession of crack cocaine are dealt with more harshly than whites convicted of cocaine possession. The crowd at the rally was very enthusiastic and loud. The enthusiasm of the crowd made it difficult for some of the speakers to be heard even though they were using a megaphone.

Visuals and Chants. Members of the church wore hoodies and carried bags of Skittles and cans of Arizona Iced Tea as a sign of solidarity. Again, as with our point about attendance, since there was no precedent for such rallies over the past six years, it was difficult to gauge prior to the event what the excitement level would be. The participants of the rally showed great excitement by clapping, whistling and blowing air

horns for the different speakers. As if on cue, the excitement of the day brought forth chants during the rally. Young children could be heard shouting out “No Justice, No Peace.” Many of the participants were heard shouting out “No Justice, No Peace.” There were also shouts of “What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!”<sup>109</sup>

Connection to Silent Generation. Some of the Silent Generation participants were moved to tears during the rally. One person from the Silent Generation said the rally reminded him of “how we used to do things during the struggle.”<sup>110</sup> Another participant stated the rally reminded her of stories she had heard from her parents when they were growing up in the south.<sup>111</sup> One woman stated “freedom is coming, a change is taking place.”<sup>112</sup>

The above observations serve to support our project’s second hypothesis:

*H2: Members of the BMBC are willing and able to take a prescribed response step when confronted with a social injustice symbol, like Trayvon Martin.*

*Researcher observations about Post-Attendance Responses.*

Renewed, but short-lived excitement. From this writer’s observation and data collected it was apparent once the July 2013 rallies took place, the excitement level of members in the BMBC from the New Britain, CT communities was very high. The members of the BMBC were willing to take action to affect change by writing letters to government officials, e.g. United States Attorney General Eric Holder and United States

---

<sup>109</sup> Lisa Backus, “Rally focuses on Civil Rights” *New Britain Herald*, July 27, 2013.

<sup>110</sup> Deacon Clemons, Second Baptist Church, New Britain, CT, July 27, 2013.

<sup>111</sup> Georgia Patterson, Saint James Missionary Baptist Church, New Britain, CT, July 27, 2013.

<sup>112</sup> Louise Jefferson, Saint James Missionary Baptist Church, New Britain, CT July 27, 2013.

Senator Chris Murphy, attend other rallies and join civic organizations like the NAACP which stand for justice for all people regardless of skin color. Immediately after the rally was over, there was a sense something new and exciting was going to start in New Britain. Many members in the BMBC talked about how they were going to become more actively involved in social justice issues. However, the reality of the situation is their conversation was mostly “just talk.” The writer of this paper noticed during the two weeks between rallies there was basically no excitement regarding the second rally planned for August 1, 2013. People in the BMBC seemed to go back to business as usual. There did not seem to be any sense of urgency for members of the BMBC to take further action-steps to eradicate inequality in the laws of the United States. This observation would lend support to the second part of H1: *There is a basic foundational commitment to social justice in the BMBC, but there are indicators that suggest the strength of this commitment is questionable.*

#### Notes about the Second Rally: August 1, 2013

As discussed in chapter 1, here we present notes about the second New Britain rally, but will not use any data from them as support for our hypotheses. On August 1, 2013 at approximately 6:30 p.m. the second rally started. It too was held in front of the New Britain Superior Courthouse in New Britain, CT.

Researcher Notes on Attendance. It was reasonable, since the NAACP New Britain chapter is a relatively large organization, that there would be a larger presence at this rally than at the first one. There are also approximately two hundred thousand persons of color in New Britain. A decent number to attend the rally would have been in the neighborhood of about five hundred people. It was disappointing to count only about

one hundred people who participated in the second rally. According to Willie Bryant “this number is a little discouraging.”<sup>113</sup> Of the one hundred people present there were about fifteen children, twenty five youths, ten young adults, and approximately forty middle aged persons who would be considered Baby Boomers, and ten seniors. There were about forty members of the BMBC and CFEJ, much less than at the first rally. About ten Caucasian people attended. The NAACP had the greatest amount of people present.

Researcher Notes Regarding Crowd Response to Speakers. It was surprising to see the number of politicians who came out. Although there was no official program, there were several politicians who spoke at the rally (see Appendix F). The Mayor of New Britain; the Honorable Timothy O’Brien, attended and was one of the speakers. He spoke for about fifteen minutes. His comments about unity between all people, quality education and equal justice received great applause from the audience. Three Pentecostal ministers spoke an inordinate amount of time. It was almost as if they were having a church service. The verbal response to the speakers at the second rally resembled what you hear in many of our black churches. There were a lot of “Amen,” “Praise the Lord,” “God is a good God,” and “Say it.” The chants during the second rally were similar to the first as well as some added chants for housing reform, equal access to medical care and for “equal pay for equal work.” The participants at the second rally used the same signs which were used in the first rally, in addition to some new ones that read, “NAACP = Justice,” “NAACP = Education Reform” and “NAACP = Mental Health Equality.”

---

<sup>113</sup> Willie Bryant, Saint James Missionary Baptist Church, New Britain, CT, August 1, 2013.

There was also less of a police presence at the second rally. The ten officers at the first rally were courteous and helpful. The four officers at the second rally just monitored traffic. There was also less of a media presence than at the first rally: only one reporter for the New Britain Herald who merely interviewed the President of the NAACP.

Researcher Notes on Distracting Factors. The ethos at the second rally was very spirited although it was very difficult to measure the participants' commitment to social justice since the message was watered-down immensely. During the second rally, other factors may have contributed to the lack of focus. There appeared to be too much distraction with speakers trying to outdo each other. The author did not receive any post-attendance responses to the second rally. It was almost as if the rally did not happen.

Notes on the Post-Rally Drop in Excitement. In the immediate aftermath of the Zimmerman verdict, there was a great public outcry from those in the BMBC. However, in the following two or three weeks after the rallies the rhetoric died down and it seemed things had become "business as usual." In the end, there was a sense there would be no further action-steps taken by the participants, at least not until the next big crisis occurred in the lives of black people.

Researcher Notes about the Differences between the Two Rallies. While both rallies were good, it appeared to this writer, the first rally was more focused. During the first rally, there was one theme: equal rights for all citizens in our judicial system. There did not appear to be any showmanship during the first rally. The first rally was more organized. There was a specific start time, an order in which the speakers would appear, and it was peaceful and not accusatory in nature. Whereas the first rally focal point was equal rights for all in light of the lack of justice in the Zimmerman verdict, the second

rally included additional issues such as “equal rights, equal pay,” “education reform,” “the criminal justice system,” “voting rights,” and other topics the speakers wanted to share. The second rally was almost hateful in tone. This writer left the second rally feeling that the message of hope was strongly overshadowed by the message of “pointing the finger.” In the second rally speakers appeared to be competing with each other to see who would get the biggest ovation. In light of these distractions, the researcher decided he could not use observations from the second rally to argue validly for the hypotheses regarding congregants’ perceptions of the BMBC’s effectiveness in pursuing social justice.

### **Findings from the Data Source #3: Interviews**

The present writer interviewed twelve persons (transcripts available upon request) to measure their perceptions regarding the BMBC’s effectiveness in pursuing social justice. The questions asked of the interviewees were the same questions that were on the PSJA survey (see Appendix A). There were three participants from each generation included in these interviews. The findings are summarized in Table 3. The responses with an “X” signify a direct quote by the participant in the text below. The responses with an “x” represent comments the participant made pertaining to the category in the table heading.



### 3. Participant Responses by Generation

Participant #	Generation	BMBC does not have responsibility to be a leader in social justice	BMBC' has responsibility to be a leader in social justice	Social justice activity in the BMBC not increasing over the last 20 years	BMBC not meeting people's needs	Social justice action-steps articulated well
1	Silent		X	X	x	x
2	Silent		X	x	x	x
3	Silent		X	X	X	x
4	Boomer		x	x	x	
5	Boomer		x	x	x	
6	Boomer		X	x	x	
7	Gen X	X		x	x	
8	Gen X	X		x	x	
9	Gen X	x		x	X	
10	Gen Y	x			x	x
11	Gen Y	X			x	x
12	Gen Y	x			x	X

Here, we restate H1: *There is a basic foundational commitment to social justice in the BMBC, but there are indicators that suggest the strength of this commitment is questionable.* To some degree, the interview data confirms this along generational lines. Persons from the Silent Generation and those from the Baby Boomer era (participants 1-6) spoke about the BMBC having a major responsibility to be a leader as it relates to social justice. Participants 1-6 said part of the foundation of the BMBC is to be deeply involved in social justice. Participant 1 stated social justice “is who the black church is.” Participant 2 stated she remembers her “family members marching during the civil rights

era with Dr. King and Dr. Abernathy.” She stated the black church has “always stood at the forefront in the fight for social justice.” Participant 3 stated while growing up he “would hear stories about protests in the south and often times those same protests would come north and the black church would actively participate in the fight for justice.” Participant 6 stated “it was very important for the BMBC to be the voice and leader for social justice.” According to them, the church has always been the place where blacks could go in times of need and the BMBC has always been involved in social justice issues from its inception. Some of the “gap” between the “ideal BMBC” and the “actual BMBC” (see RQ1B and discussion of subscores on the PSJA Survey) can be seen in the interview data. The Baby Boomers stated while the BMBC has always met and continues to meet the needs of the community it serves, it can do more. They conveyed the feeling that the BMBC does not do as much as it has done in the past. When asked about the BMBC’s relevance today, the Baby Boomers reported their belief that the church is very relevant and necessary and that it must stay involved in the affairs of its members or society would abridge their rights. According to participant 4, a Baby Boomer interviewed by this writer, “the youth of the BMBC are our future. The church must act in a decisive manner to stay focused on social justice issues because the future of our people is on the line.”<sup>114</sup> Baby Boomers stated that although they are at times involved in social justice issues, they too, personally could do more.

By contrast, Participants 7-12 do not feel as though the BMBC has a “responsibility” to be the leader in social justice. Participant 8 stated “unless it directly

---

<sup>114</sup> Participant 4, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, August 12, 2013.

involves me, I do not get involved.” Participant 7 shared “other entities help fight social justice. These would include the NAACP and other civic organizations.” Participant 11 stated, “People may use other avenues to make sure the fight for social justice takes place. It is not necessary to rely solely on the BMBC.” In the two younger age groups, the strength of their sense of the BMBC’s commitment to social justice activism is clearly more questionable (H1).

Here, we restate H3 and some research questions from chapter 1 that will help focus the presentation of our interview data:

*H3: There are differences between age groups in the way they conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and in advancing social justice.*

*RQ3A: How do Silent Generation congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?* Silent Generation members, when asked to articulate action-steps tend to conceive traditional action-steps: protesting, letter writing, petitions, and sit-ins, carrying signs at rallies that read, “No Justice; No Peace,” “Equal Rights under the Law,” “Freedom Now,” and “Unity.” The Silent Generation expressed the belief that it would be worth the risk of going to jail, if that meant they could *help* facilitate change. According to participant 1, he “has been arrested while protesting civil rights violations.”<sup>115</sup>

Accordingly, the Silent Generation tended not to believe there has been an increase in social justice activity over the past twenty years, and not surprisingly, their belief is that the greatest impact for social justice for blacks occurred during the civil

---

<sup>115</sup> Participant 1, interviewed by author, Stamford, CT, October 23, 2103.

rights era. According to participant 1, “Over the last twenty years it appears the BMBC is not as actively engaged with marches, protests and other historical aspects of the civil rights movement.” Participant 3 stated, “Times seem to have changed greatly. I remember the marches and vocal response from the BMBC; I miss that.” As a group, they were able to envision social justice activism strictly in the mode of the civil rights era.

The Silent Generation also tends to believe the BMBC’s fight for social justice should be facilitated through the personage of high-profile leaders. Using the template of larger than life figures like Rev. Dr. King, Rosa Parks, and Dr. Ralph Abernathy, they lament that there is no strong voice today leading the fight for social justice. They suggest although there are people who speak about social justice, there is no one presently on the national level who has spoken to the needs of the BMBC like the aforementioned figures from the civil rights era.

*RQ3B: How do Baby Boomer congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?* Although the Baby Boomers interviewed agreed that traditional methods of protest were worthwhile for the BMBC, and expressed a willingness to participate in rallies when organized and prescribed by BMBC leaders (like the ones for Trayvon Martin), they had greater difficulty articulating what personal involvement in social justice looked like and conceiving of action-steps to advance social justice. Some participants mentioned factors that contribute to their inability to take any initiative in social-justice-seeking: after tending to all their responsibilities, there is little time left out of their day. Baby Boomers in the BMBC are not retiring; many of them are still working. The responsibilities of work and trying to

take care of aging parents (like Participants 5 and 6) make it difficult for them to be involved in social justice issues as greatly as they would like. Participants 5 and 6 are also taking care of their grandchildren.<sup>116</sup> Both participants 5 and 6 have their grandchildren living with them. Additionally, participant 4 has a godchild living with them. Participant 5 is the primary caregiver of their parent who is in their 90's. This, too, according to those interviewed, has limited them from being personally involved in social justice issues as much as they would like.

The Baby Boomers share with the Silent Generation the conviction that BMBC social justice activism is best facilitated by a strong national figure in the ilk of Dr. King, but they do not lament the lack of such leadership as do the Silent Generation. Their belief is the BMBC has many leaders such as Pastor T.D. Jakes, the Rev. Al Sharpton, Bishop Noel Jones and Bishop Rudolph McKissick Jr. These church leaders stand for issues of social justice not only as it relates to the BMBC, but they fight injustice towards all people. The Baby Boomer participants stated because the issues that face people of color are so complex, they believe it will take a large number of leaders to meet the needs of the BMBC today.

*RQ3C: How do Generation X congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?* Like the Baby Boomers, the Generation X participants (Participants 7-9) had difficulty conceiving of action-steps in advancing social justice. As mentioned earlier, unlike the previous two generations, Generation X participants did not believe the BMBC has as part of its mission the

---

<sup>116</sup> Now many Baby Boomers are in what Oxford English and Merriam Webster Dictionaries define as the "sandwich generation." These are people who take care of their parents and grown children's children. Occasionally, these Baby Boomers find themselves taking care of their own grown children.

responsibility to lead the black community in pursuing social justice. The interview data shows that Generation X participants exhibit individualism to a higher degree than the other age groups. It was difficult for them to imagine taking action to speak out about an unjust event (like Trayvon Martin's death) if it did not concern them personally (if, for example, Trayvon were their own son). But, they also indicated that if something like this occurred, they would be more inclined to stand up for themselves and would not be inclined to wait and look to the BMBC to take stands for them.

Like the Silent Generation, the Generation X participants believe the BMBC has not increased its involvement in social justice issues, but they do not lament this as a shirking of responsibility. The Generation X participants listed other social action initiatives that were either equally pressing or more pressing than civil rights: day care centers, senior housing, and more healthcare facilities for those who suffer from mental illness or addictions and greater educational opportunities. There are other things that need to be done.

Another dilemma for Generation X participants has been disappointment with the BMBC. According to participant 7 "it has been very disappointing to hear about Henry Lyons, former President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. and the scandal associated with him."<sup>117</sup> The scandals involving clergy who had illicit affairs, a lack of financial integrity and moral failure, has caused the BMBC to lose some of the appeal it once had for them. On the question of whether BMBC needs a strong voice to lead the fight for social justice (like Dr. King), those in Generation X shared their belief that there

---

<sup>117</sup> Participant 7, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, August 19, 2014.

will never again be one strong voice to meet the needs of the BMBC. That era has passed. The world is too global for any one leader to be that relevant today.

RQ3D: *How do Generation Y congregants in the BMBC conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and advancing social justice?* Generation Y participants conceded that they are not actively involved in church activities or social justice issues like those of other generations. While they feel church is important, it is not the most important aspect of their life, nor is it the central organizing place for one to give voice to one's social concerns. Things like social media are more important. This generation feels venues like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and LinkedIn give people more and better avenues to voice their concerns. Additionally, they expressed that protesting with signs and bullhorns and petitions is not something they are used to. Further, racial injustice is not the main area in which they express rage. The interview data suggests they are more likely to involve themselves in protests related to corporate greed. They identify more with the "Occupy Wall Street" movement in New York City's Zuccotti Park, Seattle, WA and other major cities throughout the world<sup>118</sup> and their sense of solidarity lies more with those who suffer from economic inequality as opposed to racial inequality. Generation Y participants also show little understanding of the importance of the civil rights movement of fifty years ago. Their focus is on what is going on in their life right now. They are much more concerned with paying the rent, buying food and buying new clothes.

---

<sup>118</sup> Colin Moynihan, "Wall Street Protest Begins, With Demonstrators Blocked" *New York Times* September 17, 2011.

As mentioned before, Generation Y participants conceive of social justice action-steps in terms of social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instant Messages and email. Accordingly, the existence or non-existence of a strong voice in the BMBC to lead the fight for social justice is irrelevant to them, since none of these require the strong voice of a national leader.

### **Summary**

The present project used three sources of data (survey, observations of rally participation and interviews) to support three hypotheses about congregational perceptions of the effectiveness of the BMBC in pursuing social justice. The data and hypotheses connect in fascinating ways.

*H1: There is a basic foundational commitment to social justice in the BMBC, but there are indicators that suggest the strength of this commitment is questionable. Both the PSJA survey and the interviews were most useful in supporting this hypothesis.*

*H2: Members of the BMBC are willing and able to take a prescribed response step when confronted with a social injustice symbol, like Trayvon Martin. The researcher's observations were most important for this hypothesis. It is all the more impressive that attendance was across all age groups, especially in light of the findings of the weaker commitment among the younger generations in the interviews.*

*H3: There are differences between age groups in the way they conceive action-steps in combatting social injustice and in advancing social justice. The interviews were most important to this hypothesis.*



CHAPTER 5:  
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Reflections on Findings**

Positive Findings

This researcher notes as a positive find, those in the BMBC still believe God's commandment to love one another is central to fighting for social justice. The results of this study point to a positive finding that the BMBC is as committed as ever in pursuing social justice (H1). It was refreshing to note that if there is an action symbol in front of members of the BMBC, they will respond in an overwhelmingly strong fashion to make sure justice is achieved by those who are aggrieved (H2). An additional positive finding was members of Generation Y show they do have a desire to bring change to the world through mass media and social media (H3). It appears nothing intimidates those of the Generation Y demographic. The lessons learned from the struggles of the civil rights era have not been lost on this present generation.

Negative Findings

While there is perceived progress in the BMBC in working toward being effective in pursuing social justice, there were a few negative findings. These became more apparent once this study was undertaken. One such finding noted that many of the people who were very vocal in calling for change and an end to social injustice, were not present when it came time to actually participate in the rallies (see "Researcher Observations on Attendance at the First Rally" in chapter 4.). This, in the researcher's opinion, cast a

negative light upon the BMBC's efforts to have our voices heard. Additionally, the discovery of a competitive spirit between representatives of the CFEJ and the NAACP was disconcerting. Rev. Dr. Lindsay E. Curtis, a pastor of a BMBC for the past 18 years and recent president of the Norwalk chapter of the NAACP, describes the competitive mentality this way: "many in the BMBC have to stop with the crab mentality. It is time to stop pulling ourselves down and support one another."<sup>119</sup>

The lack of "follow through" after the rallies was also a great surprise. It would appear that the rally or action-step had little long lasting effect on the participants. It was expected that participants, after being energized by the rallies, would translate that energy into further action-steps. Instead, the participants went back to business as usual. This is in direct contrast to the many grass-roots self-initiatives against injustice observable during the civil right era.

#### Reflections on the Generalizability of Findings for the Black Church beyond New Britain

While the findings for the BMBC in New Britain, CT are not generalizable for the black church at large, it is reasonable to assume that many of the life issues faced by New Britain BMBC congregants also affect the larger black population. These issues include the reality of economic inequality based on race; the reality of living with white fear; the demands of raising families on a tight budget; and a shared heritage of civil rights activism. The fact that the differences in actions-steps breaks down according to age

---

<sup>119</sup> Rev. Dr. Lindsay E. Curtis, interviewed by author, Norwalk, CT, November 4, 2014.

groups (see “Data Source #3: The Interviews” in chapter 4) indicates that we are touching upon issues that are more widely generational than specific to New Britain.

Reflection: Is Social Justice (Racial Equality) the Mission of the BMBC or the NAACP Moving Forward? Has the Mantle been Passed from the Religious Organization to the Civic Organization?

One question that emerged in the findings (the distractions of the second rally, interviews with Generation X and Generation Y) was whether the pursuit of social justice is the mission of the BMBC or whether that mission has passed from the BMBC to the NAACP. The present researcher is of the belief that the pursuit of social justice for the black community is a *shared* mission between the BMBC and the NAACP, and not one or the other.

The pursuit of social justice is a distinctly *Christian* pursuit (see “Theological Foundations” in chapter 1). The mission of the BMBC should always be to further God’s kingdom here on earth. The BMBC must bring the good news of Christ to those who are lost. Jesus declared a similar message in Isaiah 61. As the BMBC goes forward in its efforts to pursue social justice reforms and equality, it is imperative that the church maintain its leadership in this effort.

For over 100 years, the NAACP has fought for civil rights and injustice in the United States. Moving forward, it would be useful for the BMBC and the NAACP to work more closely together to unify their respective efforts instead of working as individual entities. The mission of both organizations must always look to “bring healing to those who have been marginalized.”<sup>120</sup> To accomplish this, the BMBC and the

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

NAACP could partner to achieve a more positive outcome. Holding joint rallies to protest injustices, meeting with other civic organizations in the community, and collaborating with the youth to teach them the history of social justice and other struggles endured by black people in this country could facilitate this joint effort.

### **Recommendations**

#### **On the Research Design and Recommendations for Further Research**

This research was done to measure perceptions of how effective the BMBC is in pursuing social justice. While the research design worked well, there is room for improvement. Recommendations include:

1. Surveying a larger sample to measure (survey only produced 43 responses).

The larger survey sample could be accomplished by including the other three BMBCs located in New Britain in the survey distribution.

2. Utilizing different symbols to identify whether there is any one particular subject that brings about a greater response from the members of the BMBC.

Two additional symbols for research consideration include Michael Brown (see footnote 15) and John Crawford, a black man shot and killed in a Wal-Mart while walking the aisles with a toy gun he planned to purchase.<sup>121</sup>

3. Inquire more closely as to the factors that contribute to weakened commitment to social justice, e.g. Baby Boomers being overwhelmed with responsibilities, and apathy from those in Generation X. Louise Jefferson, a Baby Boomer “would love to do more as it relates to social justice, but with a mom who is

---

<sup>121</sup> Nisha Chittal, “Cops shoot and kill man holding toy gun in Wal-Mart” *Dayton Daily News*, August 13, 2014.

ninety-three and grandchildren in the home, there is no time.<sup>122</sup> Interview participant 9 stated “unless an injustice affects me, I don’t get involved. I have too much of my own stuff to worry about.”<sup>123</sup>

4. Inquire about perceptions on the dialogue between those in positions of power and those who feel they have been treated unjustly. According to Dr. Curtis “more can be accomplished if each person has a seat at the table.”<sup>124</sup>

Recommendations to the BMBC Leadership: How Can the BMBC  
and its Members “Do Better” (as the Interviewees said)  
in Advancing Social Justice?

It is necessary to use whatever tools are available to bring about change and make one’s voice heard. It is unconscionable today not to utilize social media.

Recommendation #1: *The CFEJ should appoint a social media coordinator, who can create and maintain a CFEJ Facebook page and Twitter Account, which will post news items related to Trayvon Martin, and other symbols of social injustice.*

On adapting new strategies for preventing the next Trayvon Martin killing, it is needful that we work to eliminate fearful, negative perceptions of black youth.

Recommendation #2: *BMBC pastors should confer with BMBC youth workers and youth pastors and address standards for appropriate dress. Although people have a right to wear their clothes the way they choose, “our young black youths need to pull*

---

<sup>122</sup> Louise Jefferson, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, July 27, 2013.

<sup>123</sup> Participant 9, interviewed by author, New Britain, CT, August 16, 2013.

<sup>124</sup> Rev. Dr. Lindsay E. Curtis, interviewed by author, Norwalk, CT, November 4, 2014.

their pants up”<sup>125</sup> and our young sisters need to put their clothes on. They should stop drawing negative attention toward themselves.

This author, along with Dr. Curtis, believes there must be open lines of communication between police and those in the neighborhood they are sworn to protect.

Recommendation #3: *BMBC pastors should create a regular church event (perhaps a panel discussion forum or a church block party) where neighborhood police are invited to become familiar with and interact with BMBC congregants.* Black people have to learn to stop viewing the police as the adversary; they are not. However, because of distrust on both sides, there are issues that need to be addressed including “broken windows” policing (see literature review in chapter 2). When an arm of the law sits back and waits for or goes out of its way to focus on small violations or relatively small crimes, it takes away from developing civil relationships between the police and the community. This author is a retired police officer and believes “broken windows” is another form of racial discrimination that must be eliminated.

Blacks and whites must learn to work together. It is unfortunate that one of the most segregated times in America is Sunday morning

Recommendation #4: *BMBC churches on occasion (e.g. Dr. King’s birthday, Good Friday) should invite and partner with white churches in creating joint events.* In an effort to practice this model, Dr. Curtis has partnered with a sister Presbyterian Church in Wilton, CT that is very different than the BMBC. Additionally, Dr. Curtis is working together with the Wilton Baptist Church to promote efforts to maintain good race

---

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

relations. Working cooperatively with others who do not look like us will help allay “white fears” on the part of blacks, and “black fears” on the part of whites.

Another area the leadership of the BMBC can further develop in the future is educating young black persons on the importance of civic involvement and civic responsibility.

Recommendation #5: *The BMBC should appoint a “civics” education director, who can promote civics awareness among young people and who can work through the public schools and youth groups to motivate black youths to be involved with the voting process and possibly endeavor to sit in an elected position.* There will most likely never be another leader like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the scene again. However, our young black youths must know the opportunity is there for them to be at the table if they should choose to run for elected office. This will ensure that our voices will continue to be heard, and will shape the agenda for the coming years.

We should also help our young people to know their history. The leadership of the BMBC must get away from just celebrating Black History month only in February.

Recommendation #6: *Devote BMBC pulpits to telling our young people about the victories blacks achieved during the civil rights era.* BMBC pastors must help them to understand that our present freedoms are directly related to the past hard work and sacrifices of those blacks who have gone before us. Perhaps the BMBC can invite social justice activists to preach and teach members of the BMBC. During times of celebration, invitations to prominent leaders like the Rev. Al Sharpton or Dr. Cornell West could be extended inviting them to share insights on how the BMBC can stay relevant in this day and age.

According to Dr. Curtis, the future looks bright for the BMBC. A favorite line from Dr. Curtis is he “is the eternal optimist. God has been good to us and He will continue to be good to us.”<sup>126</sup> The encouraging hope is the BMBC is on the right track and social justice will always be in the forefront of our endeavors.

### **Final Reflection: Addressing the Sense of “Futility”**

In spite of all the gains blacks have achieved over the past fifty years, it was surprising to this author that the BMBC and black people in general do not press the issue of injustice more forcefully. During the civil rights era, the Montgomery bus boycott lasted thirteen months. It seems today some members of the BMBC react to issues of injustice only as long as the issue is in the news. When the cameras are gone or the next news item comes up, we quickly forget the struggle. Also, the apathy shown by some in Generation X was surprising. According to Dr. Curtis “those in power may have changed the laws to reflect ‘Jim Crow’ is no longer in the books, but in reality racism, misrepresentation, lack of affordable housing, police brutality, unequal judicial system still exist today”<sup>127</sup> and it must end.

We have to do better meeting the needs of the people we serve. We have to continue to fight injustice wherever it rears its head. People may not understand and others may get tired, however, the fight must continue. The injustices of yesterday must not and should not be allowed to continue. The fight for equal rights must not end until

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



every person, regardless of the color of their skin, is treated equally. This is the mission of the BMBC and proudly we will continue in that endeavor.

APPENDICES

A. Survey Questions

Perception of Social Justice Activism in the Black Missionary Baptist Church (PSJA)

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Disagree
- 4. Strongly disagree
- 5. Don't know

1. The Black Missionary Baptist Church has a responsibility to be a leader as it relates to social justice. 1 2 3 4 5

2. The Black Missionary Baptist Church is actively involved in social justice. 1 2 3 4 5

3. There has been an increase in involvement in social justice over the twenty years in the Black Missionary Baptist Church. 1 2 3 4 5

4. The Black Missionary Baptist Church meets the needs of community it serves. 1 2 3 4 5

5. Social justice is not as important as it was fifty years ago. 1 2 3 4 5

6. Generation X (born 1960 – 1980) and Generation Y (1980 -2000) persons in the Black Missionary Baptist Church are involved greatly in social justice issues. 1 2 3 4 5

7. The Black Missionary Baptist Church is effective in championing causes for social justice. 1 2 3 4 5

8. The Black Missionary Baptist Church is not relevant today. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Jesus was a champion of social justice issues. 1 2 3 4 5
10. The Black Missionary Baptist Church has no focus. 1 2 3 4 5
11. I am actively involved with social justice issues. 1 2 3 4 5
12. The Black Missionary Baptist Church needs a strong voice to lead in the fight for social justice. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Spiritual excitement in the Black Missionary Baptist Church will lead to greater participation as it relates to social justice issues. 1 2 3 4 5

\*\* If you answer with a **1** please indicate on the back **why you are actively** engaged with social justice issues. If you answer with a **4**, please indicate on the back **why you are not engaged** in social justice issues.

## B. Results of Survey

Participant	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q2	Q3	Q3	Q4	Q4	Q5	Q5	Q6	Q6	Q7	Q7	Q8	Q8	Q9	Q9	Q10	Q10
	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score	sheet choice	converted score
Participant 1	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4
Participant 2	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	4	5	2	4	5	3
Participant 3	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	4	3	4	1	5	1	5	4	5	1	5	3	4
Participant 4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	4	5	2	4	4	5
Participant 5	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	4	5
Participant 6	2	4	5	3	5	3	5	3	3	4	3	2	5	3	3	4	1	5	3	4
Participant 7	2	4	3	2	2	4	4	1	4	5	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	4	5	3
Participant 8	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	1	5	4	5
Participant 9	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4
Participant 10	1	5	2	4	3	2	2	4	4	5	4	2	2	4	4	5	1	5	4	5
Participant 11	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	5	3	5	3	2	4	5	3	2	4	5	3
Participant 12	2	4	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	4	2	4	3	2	3	4	2	4	2	2
Participant 13	1	5	3	2	4	2	4	1	5	3	5	3	3	2	3	4	2	4	3	4
Participant 14	2	4	2	4	3	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	2	2	4	4	5
Participant 15	2	4	5	3	3	2	3	2	3	4	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	4	3	4
Participant 16	1	5	3	2	4	2	3	2	4	5	4	2	3	2	4	5	2	4	3	4
Participant 17	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	4	5	2	4	2	4	4	5	2	4	4	5
Participant 18	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	4	5	3	5	3	5	3
Participant 19	1	5	5	3	3	2	2	4	3	5	3	5	5	1	1	1	3	2	3	4
Participant 20	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	1	1	5	1	5	1	1	1	5	1	1
Participant 21	2	4	2	4	3	2	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	4	1	1	2	4	3	4
Participant 22	5	3	1	5	1	5	1	5	4	5	1	5	1	5	4	5	1	5	4	5
Participant 23	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	4	5	3	4	4	5
Participant 24	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	4	1	1	2	4	1	5	3	4	1	5	4	5
Participant 25	1	5	2	4	2	4	3	2	4	5	2	4	2	4	4	5	1	5	3	4
Participant 26	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	2	4	5	2	4	5	1	4	5	5	3	4	5
Participant 27	2	4	2	4	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	2
Participant 28	2	4	2	4	5	3	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	5	3	1	5	2	2
Participant 29	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4
Participant 30	2	4	2	4	5	3	2	4	4	5	3	2	5	1	3	4	1	5	3	4
Participant 31	1	5	4	1	2	4	4	1	3	4	4	2	4	5	4	5	1	5	1	1
Participant 32	5	3	5	3	5	3	5	3	2	2	5	3	5	1	5	3	5	3	1	1
Participant 33	1	5	2	4	2	4	2	4	4	5	3	2	2	4	4	5	1	5	4	5
Participant 34	2	4	2	4	1	5	2	4	4	5	3	2	2	4	4	5	1	5	4	5
Participant 35	2	4	1	5	2	4	1	5	4	5	2	4	1	5	2	2	2	4	3	4
Participant 36	1	5	1	5	2	4	1	5	3	4	5	3	2	4	3	4	1	5	4	5
Participant 37	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	1	5	4	5
Participant 38	1	5	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	5	1	1
Participant 39	1	5	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	5	1	1
Participant 40	2	4	5	3	5	3	1	5	2	2	5	3	3	2	3	4	2	4	3	4
Participant 41	1	5	1	5	2	4	1	5	4	5	3	3	1	5	3	4	3	5	3	3
Participant 42	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	4	4	5	2	4	1	5	4	5	1	5	1	1
Participant 43	2	4	1	5	2	4	3	5	3	4	1	5	1	5	4	5	1	5	3	4

	Q1 AVG	Q2 AVG	Q3 AVG	Q4 AVG	Q5 AVG	Q6 AVG	Q7 AVG	Q8 AVG	Q9 AVG	Q10 AVG
	4.35	3.79	3.70	3.49	3.77	3.33	3.53	3.81	4.28	3.65
	<b>BMBC</b> ideal	<b>BMBC</b> actual	<b>BMBC</b> actual	<b>BMBC</b> actual	Personal Commitmt	<b>BMBC</b> actual	<b>BMBC</b> actual	<b>BMBC</b> actual	Personal Commitmt	<b>BMBC</b> actual
	responsible to be a leader	actively involved	increase over past 20 yrs	meets community needs	as impor- tant as 50 yrs ago	am XY greatly involved	effective in cham- pioning	relevant today	champion of soc just	focused
# of 1's (SD)	0	1	0	3	2	0	4	3	0	6
# of 2's (D)	0	6	8	9	7	13	8	5	1	3
# of 3's (DK)	2	5	5	2	3	7	1	4	5	5
# of 4's (A)	24	20	22	22	18	19	21	16	18	15
# of 5's (SA)	17	11	8	7	13	4	9	15	19	14



### C. Scoring System for the PSJA Survey

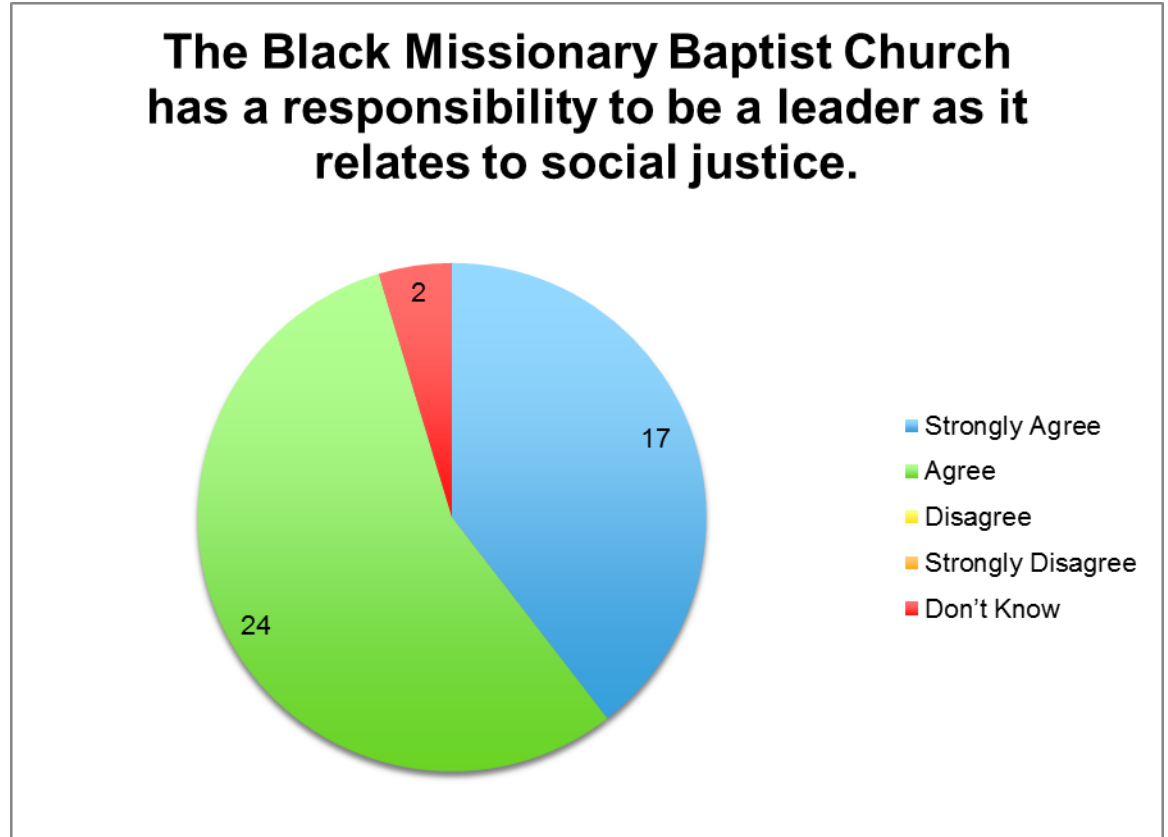
Scoring System for measuring commitment to social justice in the BMBC

Strongly Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Don't know

Q1: The Black Missionary Baptist Church has a responsibility to be a leader as it relates to social justice.	1	2	4	5	3
Q2: The Black Missionary Baptist Church is actively involved in social justice	1	2	4	5	3
Q3: There has been an increase in involvement in social justice over the past twenty years in the Black Missionary Baptist Church.	1	2	4	5	3
Q4: The Black Missionary Baptist Church meets the needs of community it serves	1	2	4	5	3
Q5: Social justice is not as important as it was fifty years ago	5	4	2	1	3
Q6: Generation X (born 1960 – 1980) and Generation Y (1980 -2000) persons in the Black Missionary Baptist Church are involved greatly in social justice issues	1	2	4	5	3
Q7: The Black Missionary Baptist Church is effective in championing causes for social justice.	1	2	4	5	3
Q8: The Black Missionary Baptist Church is not relevant today	5	4	2	1	3
Q9: Jesus was a champion of social justice issues	1	2	4	5	3
Q10: The Black Missionary Baptist Church has no focus	5	4	2	1	3
Q11: I am actively involved with social justice issues	1	2	4	5	3
Q12: The Black Missionary Baptist Church needs a strong voice to lead in the fight for social justice	1	2	4	5	3
Q13: Spiritual excitement in the Black Missionary Baptist Church will lead to greater participation as it relates to social justice issues	1	2	4	5	3

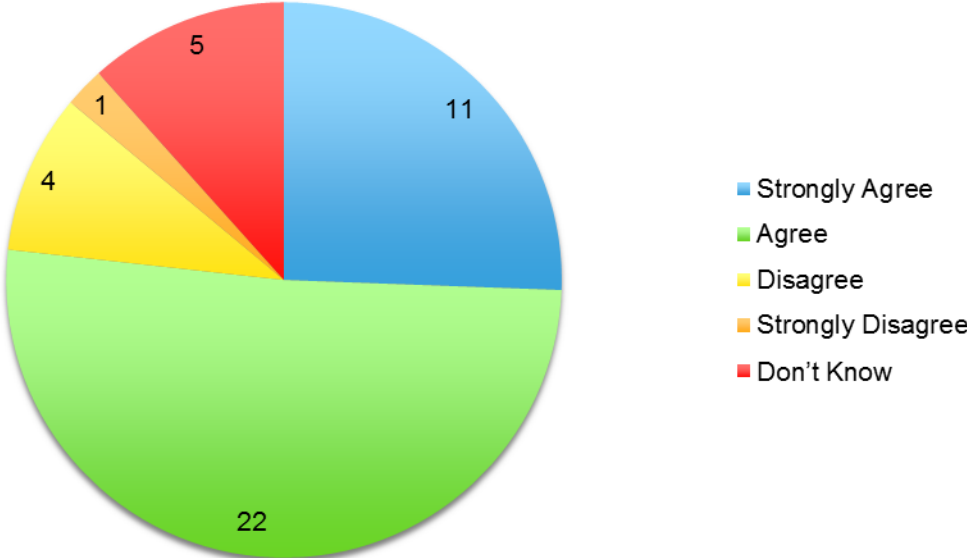
D. Charts Illustrating PSJA Survey Responses

Question 1



Question 2

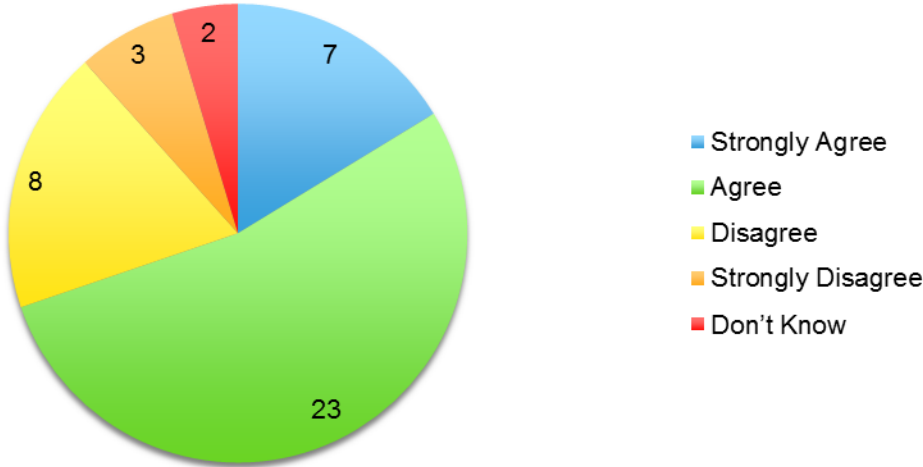
**The Black Missionary Baptist Church is actively involved in social justice.**





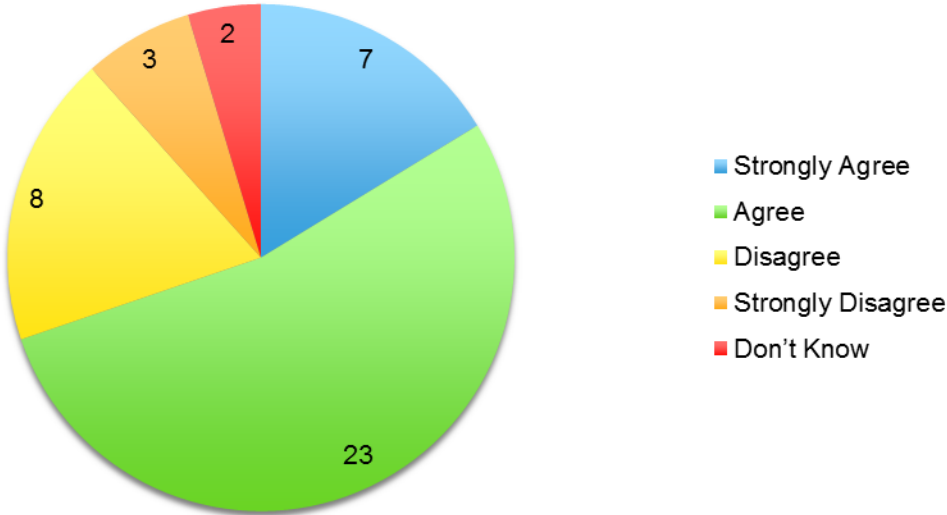
Question 3

**There has been an increase in involvement in social justice over the twenty years in the Black Missionary Baptist Church**



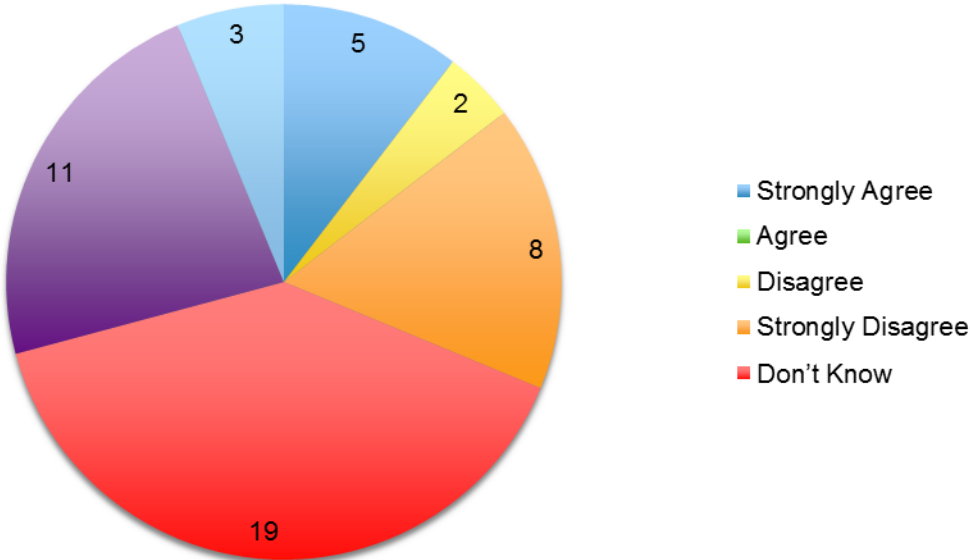
Question 4

**The Black Missionary Baptist Church  
meets the needs of community it  
serves.**



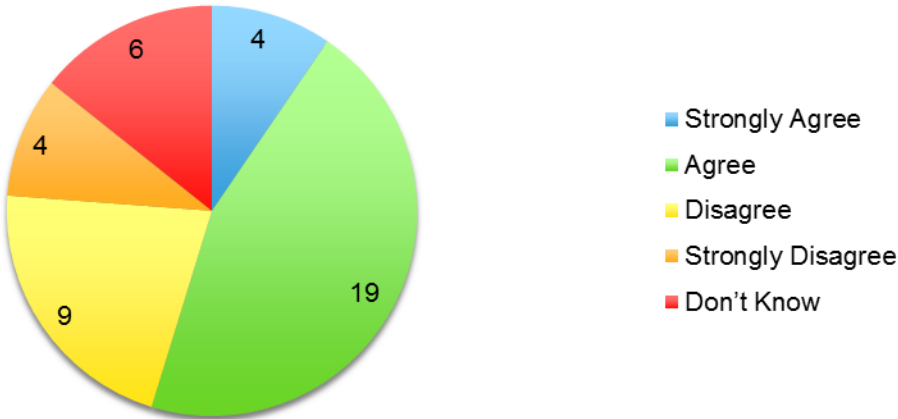
Question 5

**Social justice is not as important as it was fifty years ago.**



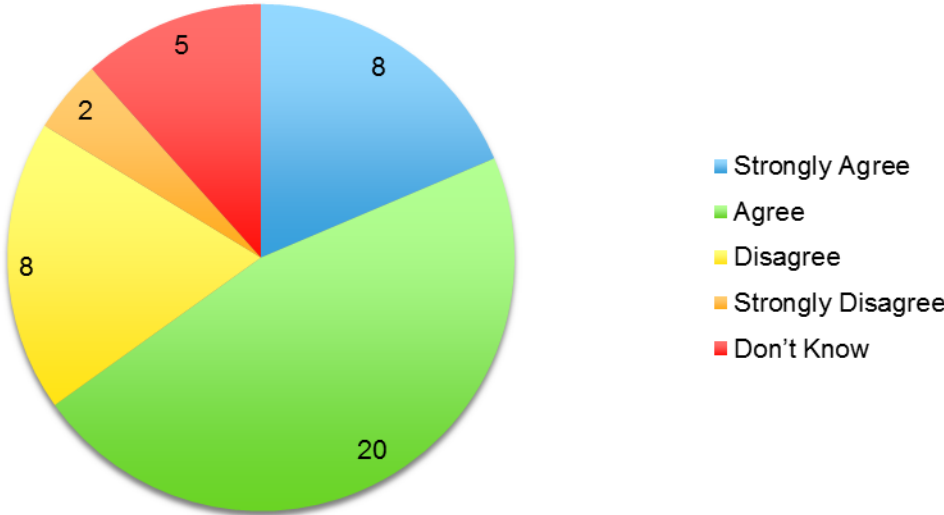
Question 6

**Generation X (born 1960 – 1980) and Generation Y (1980 -2000) persons in the Black Missionary Baptist Church are involved greatly in social justice issues.**



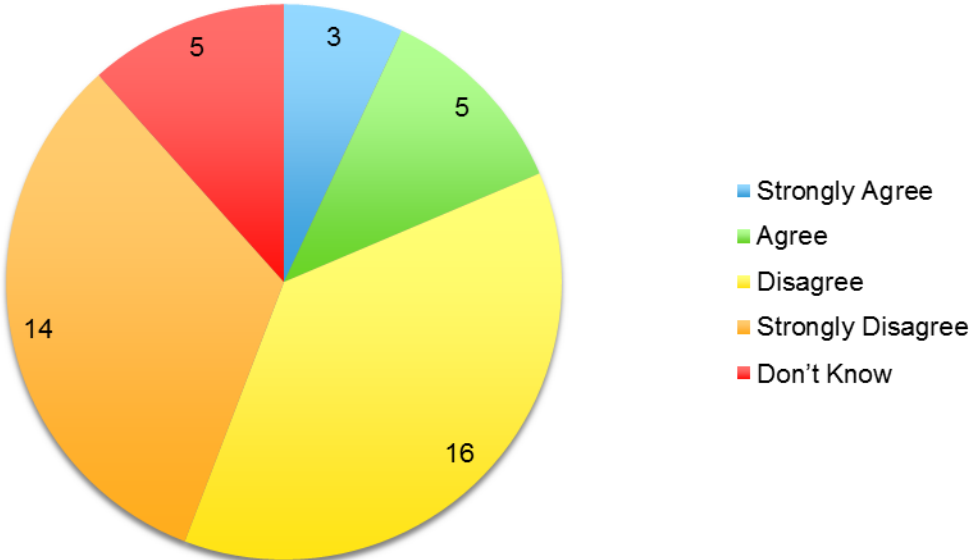
Question 7

**The Black Missionary Baptist Church is effective in championing causes for social justice.**



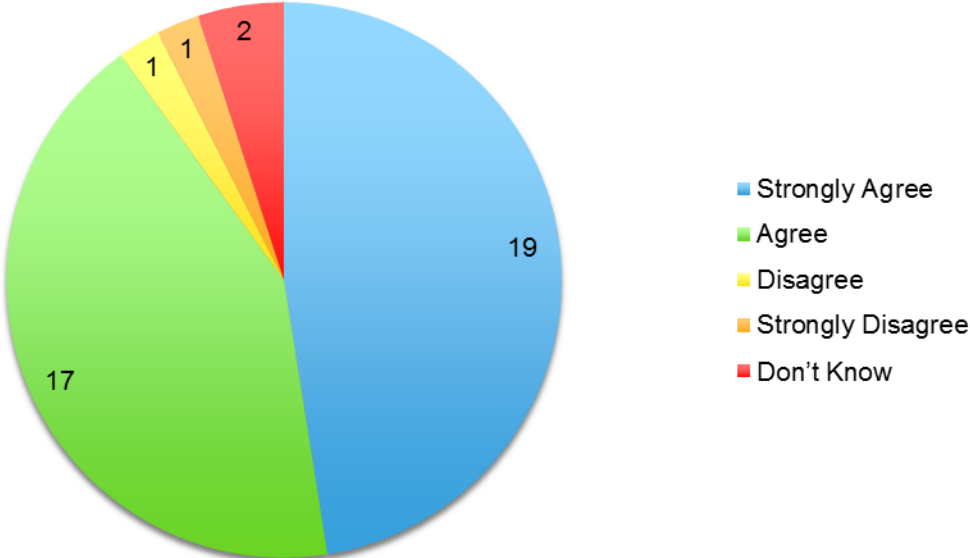
Question 8

**The Black Missionary Baptist Church is not relevant today.**



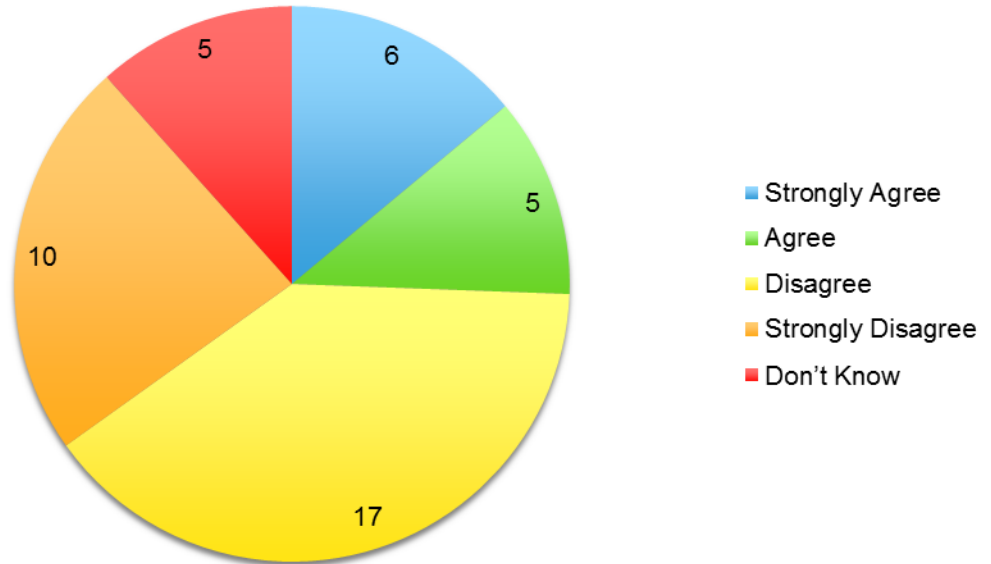
Question 9

**Jesus was a champion of social justice issues.**



Question 10

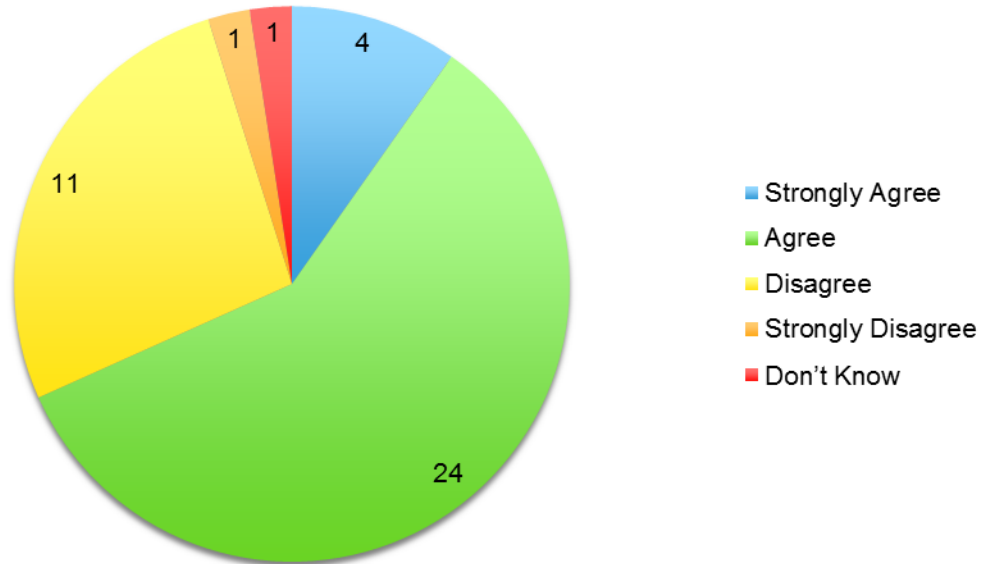
**The Black Missionary Baptist Church  
has no focus**





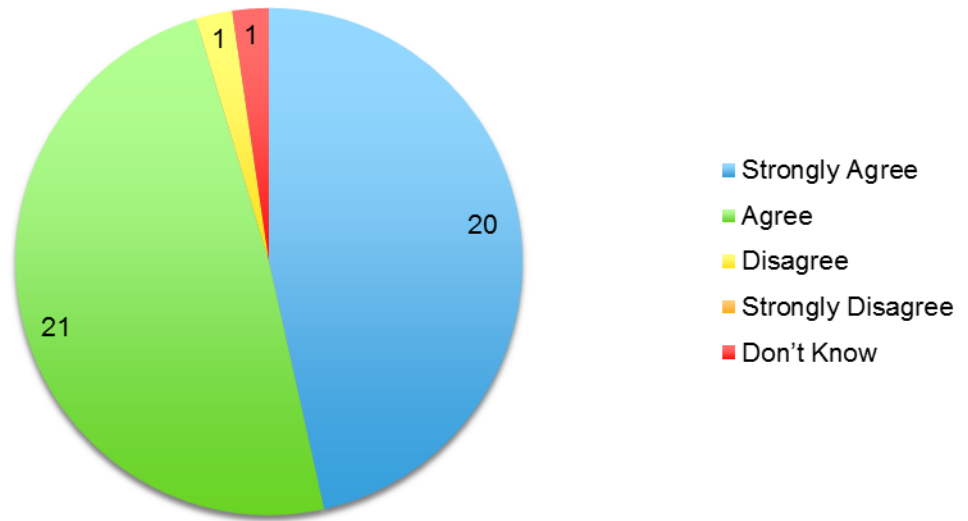
Question 11

**I am actively involved with social justice issues.**



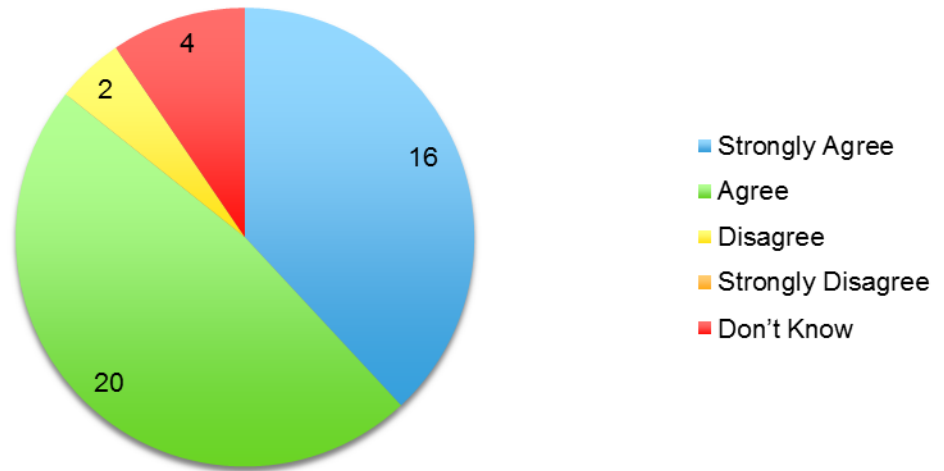
Question 12

**The Black Missionary Baptist Church  
needs a strong voice to lead in the fight  
for social justice.**



Question 13

**Spiritual excitement in the Black  
Missionary Baptist Church will lead to  
greater participation as it relates to  
social justice issues.**



Question Number	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
1	The Black Missionary Baptist Church has a responsibility to be a leader as it relates to social justice.	17	24	0	0	2	43
2	The Black Missionary Baptist Church is actively involved in social justice.	11	22	4	1	5	43
3	There has been an increase in involvement in social justice over the twenty years in the Black Missionary Baptist Church	8	21	6	2	5	42
4	The Black Missionary Baptist Church meets the needs of community it serves.	7	23	8	3	2	43
5	Social justice is not as important as it was fifty years ago.	2	8	19	11	3	43
6	Generation X (born 1960 – 1980) and Generation Y (1980 -2000) persons in the Black Missionary Baptist Church are involved greatly in social justice issues.	4	19	9	4	6	42
7	The Black Missionary Baptist Church is effective in championing causes for social justice.	8	20	8	2	5	43
8	The Black Missionary Baptist Church is not relevant today.	3	5	16	14	5	43
9	Jesus was a champion of social justice issues.	19	17	1	1	2	40
10	The Black Missionary Baptist Church has no focus	6	5	17	10	5	43
11	I am actively involved with social justice issues.	4	24	11	1	1	41
12	The Black Missionary Baptist Church needs a strong voice to lead in the fight for social justice.	20	21	1	0	1	43
13	Spiritual excitement in the Black Missionary Baptist Church will lead to greater participation as it relates to social justice issues.	16	20	2	0	4	42

E. Speakers from the Rally dated July 27, 2013

Rev. John W. Walker, Pastor of Saint James MBC New Britain

Ronald P. Davis, President of the New Britain chapter of the NAACP

Min. Rha-Sheen Brown, Associate Minister Right Now Ministries, New Britain

Rev. Hugh O. Brooks, Pastor of Second Baptist Church, New Britain

Deacon Charles Crockett, Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church Hartford, CT

Bridgette Brown, Community affairs liaison New Britain

Unidentified child about 11 who made comment about wanting to be friends with blacks and whites.

F. Speakers from the Rally dated August 1, 2013

Ronald P. Davis, President of the New Britain chapter of the NAACP

Mayor Tim O'Brien, Mayor of New Britain, CT

Unidentified Assemblyman Ward 9 New Britain, CT

Min. Rha-Sheen Brown, Associate Minister Right Now Ministries

Evangelist Brown, mother of Min. Rha-Sheen Brown

Unidentified woman whose son is incarcerated on drug charges

G. Trayvon Martin Rally Photos

Page 1 of 1



<http://www3.hdnux.com/photos/12/34/43/2738414/9/628x471.jpg>

2/26/2014

Travon Martin Rally – Stamford, CT



<http://ww4.hdnux.com/photos/12/34/43/2738415/9/628x471.jpg>

2/26/2014

Trayvon Martin Rally Union Baptist Church---Stamford, CT





<http://ww4.hdnux.com/photos/22/66/71/4943467/3/628x471.jpg>

2/25/2014

Trayvon Martin Rally Government Center---Stamford, CT



<http://ww1.hdnux.com/photos/22/66/65/4943180/3/628x471.jpg>

2/25/2014

Trayvon Martin Rally---Norwalk, CT

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ayers, Danielle L. and Reginald W. Williams Jr. *To Serve This Present Age: Social Justice Ministries in the Black Church*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2013.
- Bender, Hilary, Merle R. Jordan, and Larry VandeCreek, "Research in Pastoral Care and Counseling." Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008.
- Bowman, Benjamin. Rioters and Protestors, Hoodies and Children: Analyzing Newspapers Representations of Young People during the Riots. MA diss., University of Bath, 2011.
- Bradley, Anthony B. "The Marxist Roots of Black Liberation Theology." *Acton Institute: For the Study of Religion and Liberty*. April 2, 2008.
- Byars, Ronald P. "The Future of Protestant Worship: Beyond the Worship Wars." Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Carpenter, Joel A. Compassionate Evangelism. *Christianity Today*. December 1, 2003.
- Cone, James H. *Black Theology & Black Power*. New York: Seabury Press, 1969.
- Cone, James H., *Black Theology & Black Power*. Orbis Books, 1997.
- Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books, 1970.
- Cone, James H. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. New York: Orbis Books, 2011.
- Crawford, Evans E. *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- Dasa, Gadadhara Pandit. "Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi: The Liberating Power of Non-Violence." The Blog, Huffington Post. Entry posted January 21, 2104. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gadadhara-pandit-dasa/martin-luther-king-jr-and\\_3\\_b\\_4631610.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gadadhara-pandit-dasa/martin-luther-king-jr-and_3_b_4631610.html) (accessed January 21, 2014)
- DeYoung, Curtiss Paul. *The Role of the Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement: Justice, Peace & Reconciliation the Empire of Martin Luther King*. Guadeloupe, 2011.
- Fitts, Leroy, *A History of Black Baptists*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985.
- Forbes, Jr., James A. *Whose Gospel: A Guide to Progressive Protestantism*. New York: New York Press, 2010.
- Hampton, Henry and Steve Fayer. *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

- Hare, Kenneth M. *They Walked To Freedom 1955-1956: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. Champaign, IL: Spotlight Press, 2005.
- Howard, Gregory M. *Black Sacred Rhetoric: The Theology and Testimony of Religious Folk Talk*. Memphis, TN: BoarderStone Press, 2010.
- Hunter, James Davidson. *To Change the World; The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- King Jr., Martin Luther. *The Power of Non-Violence*. January 4, 1957.
- King Jr., Martin Luther. "My Pilgrimage to Nonviolence." *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project*, 1958.
- King Jr., Martin Luther. "Letter From Birmingham Jail." April 16, 1963.
- Knight-El, Fahim A. The Black Church: A Powerful Institution with No Power. *Keeping It Real*, October, 2012. [http://fahimknightsworld.blogspot.com/2012/10/the-black-church-powerful-institution\\_2.html](http://fahimknightsworld.blogspot.com/2012/10/the-black-church-powerful-institution_2.html)
- Lathrop, Gordon. *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993, 40.
- Levy, Peter B. *Let Freedom Ring: A Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992.
- McBride, Michael. "Now is the time for comprehensive action to reduce gun violence." *Lifelines to Healing, PICO National Network*, July 13, 2013. <http://www.piconetwork.org/issues/lifelines>
- Perkins, John M. *Interview by Charles Marsh: Let Justice Roll Down*. University of Charlottesville, VA, April 22, 2009.
- Pinn, Anne H. and Anthony B. Pinn. *Fortress introduction to Black Church History*. Minneapolis, MN: Pilgrim Press, 2002.
- Pius, N. H. *An Outline of Baptist History U.S.A.* Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1911.
- Pityana, Nyameko. *What is Black Consciousness? Black Theology: The South African Voice*, ed. Basil Moore. London: C. Hurst, 1973.
- Porch, James M., Jimmy Garcia III, and Sherman R. Tribble, "Diverse Baptist Worship Styles: A Panel." *Baptist and History* 37, no. 3 (2002): 26-34.
- Proctor, Samuel D. *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994.

Reynolds, John. *The Fight for Freedom: A Memoir of my Years in the Civil Rights Movement*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2012.

Rhodes, Ron. "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience." *Christian Research Journal* (1991).

Scott, John L. *Civil Rights Voice for the Oppressed: The Story of John L. Scott*. (New York: Beckham Publications Group, 2013).

Smith, Gary. S. J. *Radical Compassion: Finding Christ in the Heart of the Poor*. Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2002.

Williams, Juan. *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1964*. New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1987.