**Panel\_ The Politics of Black Religion in the Age of Trump**

[00:00:00] **Martien Halvorson-Taylor** OK. Now, the important part, the Religion, Race & Democracy Lab is thrilled to be a presenting partner with the University of Richmond for today's panel, "The Politics of Black Religion in the Age of Trump," the first event of a three-day symposium called "Wyatt Tee Walker and the Politics of Black Religion," organized by the University of Richmond's visiting professor and former UVA faculty member, Corey D.B. Walker, who I will introduce in a moment. We hope that you will join us for the rest of the symposium events, which will take place tomorrow and Friday at the University of Richmond and will also be webcast live. For more information, visit richmond.edu/walker. Over the next three days, a distinguished group of scholars will critically engage the complex politics of Black religion through the lens of the life, thought, and practice of the theologian Wyatt Tee Walker, a central figure in the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1960s. Walker served as the chief of staff to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and he was executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and then served as pastor of Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem for several decades. In today's conversation, our panel of UVA scholars, moderated by Corey Walker, will consider Black religion in the age of Trump, a time fraught with religious extremism and racial antagonism floated on the back of Black religion, always with Wyatt Tee Walker in the front of our minds. And now I'd like to introduce you to our panelists and moderators before they take the stage.

[00:01:54] **Martien Halvorson-Taylor** Ashon Crawley is associate professor of religious studies and African American Studies at the University of Virginia. He is the author of Black Pentecostal Breath The Aesthetics of Possibility, an investigation of His Athletics and Performance as Modes of Collective Social Imagination, and also the forthcoming lonely letters and exploration of the interrelation of Blackness, mysticism and quantum mechanics and love. Larycia Hawkins is assistant professor of politics and religious studies at the University of Virginia. Her study... Her story of embodied solidarity with Muslim women is the subject of the 2018 documentary film, Same God. She is currently working on a book titled Trump, Tea Party Women, and the Rebirth of a White Christian Nation. Professor Hawkins serves as a faculty lab partner in the Religion, Race and Democracy Lab. Kai Parker is an assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia. Professor Parker studies the religious history of urban inequality, gospel music, internationalist and diaspora missiology, Ethiopianism, the intersection of biblical prophetic theology and modern social science and Black religious thought, Reparations the influence of rural and apocalyptic world views on the formation of urban religious ways of being, and the theological valences of criminal justice reform and prison abolitionism. Jalane Schmidt is an associate professor in the University of Virginia's Religious Studies Department. Her research and teaching are focused on African diaspora religions of the Caribbean and in Latin America, and particularly on its festivals and rituals. In her book Cachita's Streets: The Virgin of Charity, Race, and Revolution in Cuba, she examines religious, racial and cultural hybridity in the Americas by interpreting the national expansion of this popular patron saint. I should also mention that a key organizer in the events in Charlottesville in 2017, she was the top of the list of the 2017 Chronicle of Higher Education's influence list for people who made a difference in higher education. And finally, Corey D. B. Walker is visiting professor at the University of Richmond, where he teaches courses in leadership studies and the humanities at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies and the School of Arts and Sciences, respectively. He collaborates with campus and community partners on research, teaching and public programing on the university's recently acquired Wyatt Tee Walker collection. He is also visiting professor of Religion in Society at Union Presbyterian Seminary, senior fellow in the Religious Freedom, its Senior Fellow in Religious Freedom at the Religious Freedom Center of the Freedom Forum Institute in Washington, D.C., and distinguished researcher at the Global Center for Advanced Studies in Dublin, Ireland. Please help me welcome all of these esteemed guests.

[00:05:37] **Corey D. B. Walker** OK, Thank you, Martine. Thank you, Kurtis. We want to thank all of you for joining us this afternoon for what what promises to be a three day event filled with some very provocative presentations, some great questions and learning by both our audience and also participants. Today's conversation opens up the 2020 Wyatt Tee Walker symposium. And today we thought we'd open with a conversation on the politics of Black religion in the age of Trump. What I will do is offer some framing remarks inspired by Wyatt Tee Walker. And if you look in your program, you'll see a brief bio of Wyatt Tee Walker. And what I'm going to do is take from a significant episode in Wyatt Tee's public journey; 1963 Birmingham campaign. Wyatt Tee Walker was one of the critical architects of the Birmingham campaign. What he called Project C and Birmingham was one of the pivotal events in the long Black freedom struggle, particularly for what it did in terms of bringing down a culture of white supremacy. Wyatt Tee really draws us to a number of issues that are not only germane in our particular moment in our nation, but also in our world. Wyatt Tee had a global vision for Black freedom and that vision had him travel all across the world. He was very much involved in the freedom movement in South Africa, very much involved in freedom politics in the Middle East, and of course, also involved in deep collaboration with our, with our colleagues across South Asia, as well as in East Asia.

[00:07:35] **Corey D. B. Walker** Wyatt Tee stated these words. "There were several necessary ingredients that made the Birmingham movement the huge success it was, and chief among these was the fact that the Birmingham movement was a great singing movement." 1963 was not only a year that marked the centennial anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. It also stood as a pivotal year in the Black freedom struggle. The Birmingham campaign brought the drama of the civil rights movement to the center of American public life. Widely acknowledged by movement leaders and scholars as a crucial turning point, Birmingham unleashed all the tensions that long riddle the American experiment with democracy. In many ways, Birmingham was a microcosm of the American nation, a community rife with systemic racism and institutionalized violence, countered by a people straining against hope for the realization of a new nation and deep democracy. Today's conversation takes as its inspiration. The rich textures of freedom captured in Wyatt Tee Walker's words and engaged in and engaging the theme, The Politics of Black Religion in the Age of Trump. This conversation looks at the politics of Black religion as a protein matrix that enables us to engage what the late Charles Long called a "serious human discourse". For Black religion, we understand, is not just a singular tradition because traditions are cumulative and not simply causal. They represent the manner in which creative, intellectual imagination enables the past to become a resource for renewal. Such renewal was the topic of our public conversation in our contemporary moment. One that reminds us that the deep fractures and cleavages that marked the landscape of Birmingham in 1963 continue to mark the landscape of America today.

[00:10:09] **Corey D. B. Walker** I'm excited to have my distinguished colleagues here to discuss this important issue. First, I want to begin with you, Ashon. How do you begin to think about this big complex politics of Black religion in the age of Trump?

[00:10:27] **Ashon Crawley** Thank you for the invitation and thank you all for being here, especially my students. Thank you. Really appreciate it. I've prepared a short hopefully five minute thing, because if I don't write it, I'll just talk. And this is about friendship and queerness. And it's an eight very short part, no, seven very short parts, I promise. Number one, Black religion in the age of Trump or in whatever age needs to practice friendship and Black religion in the age of Trump needs Black queerness, Black queerness is fundamental to, but also excluded from institutional practices of Black religion because Black queerness unsettles identity fully because it is open and capacious and enduring. This, it's being open and capacious and enduring is its gift, not as identity, but as a mode of relation. Number two, when Black religion functions in the service of rather than against empire dominance and violence, it loses its life and breath. It ceases to be the practice of radicalism. It relinquishes friendship. Three, Michel Foucault's interview "Friendship as a Way of Life", he says the following "In friendship, you must invent from A to Z how to be with one another, which in its initial moments is formless." In other words, we must be interventional to respond to the urgency of any now moment. Black religion in the age of Trump must rediscover friendship. Number four, the interpersonal is how I come to understand the problem of religiosity. As a person attempting to practice Black queerness as life in relation, having been excluded from religious communities that have formed me because of doctrinal and theological breaks between those communities and my practice. There are questions that would be necessary for reestablishing relations for the rediscovery of friendship. Questions like: How are you? Questions like, Can you help me understand you? Questions like, is there a way for us to practice relation in our difference? These questions cannot be asked under the regime of identity because it is a thing that assumes a stable core coherence and unchanging essence. But what Black religion is, is a freedom impulse is a liberatory drive and verve. It is not identity, but practice. We must learn how to practice relation. We must learn how to refuse, to relinquish one another for something like doctrinal, and for something like doctrinal integrity of traditions. Number five, I have been writing about white supremacy as the renunciation of the flesh. How white supremacy is the practice of renunciation, of relation, of the social, of Blackness. And I have been teaching, my students will tell you, Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" and have been thinking a lot about the character Harpo. He love to cook. He loved to clean. He loved to take care of children. But because he wanted to be a real man, because he wanted to participate in patriarchal dominance, he was willing to relinquish his joy, his absolute delight and happiness. He was willing to relinquish his friendship with his wife in order to compel her to mind him. He was willing to do this with brutal violence. Harpo gave up his joy to attempt the normative and I think about the Black churches relinquishing of Black queer people, their release of joy and delight found in Black queer praise and practice in order to assert normative doctrines and theologies of sex, sexuality and sin. It is heartbreaking. The desire for the normative function and form dispenses with differance and renounces possibility for, and of, and about relation. "The Color Purple" shows me that men have the ability to do emotional, intimate, and aesthetic labor. It brings Harpo lots of joy to do it. That brings Harpo a lot of misery to live in normative life. Walker elaborates the ways the systems of domination called patriarchy and hetero-sexism and queer-antagonism produce occasions for men to practice renunciation of the social field in which this kind of labor is produced. So when Harpo relinquishes the care work he enjoyed so much in order to be a real man, in order to enact patriarchal power, he also practiced the refuse relation to his own capacity for intimacy and friendship with Sophia that makes his work possible. It is the renunciation of labor and the sociality that has had and gain and practice through the labor. He gives up and relinquishes the capacity for being in relation that is deeply emotional, intimate, and physical. He gives up friendship as a way of life. Number six, we must rethink tradition. How do our particular practices of Christianity or Islam or Buddhism or agnosticism open us up to relation? This question of the possibility for being moved is informed by my reading of Imani Perry's book Vexy Thing. We must contend for relation with one another. We must be open to being moved by one another. This openness to being moved is what Black religiosity as practice teaches. But this capacity for being moved and being undone and being vulnerable is relinquished in the concept of identity grounded in the past of resistance that presumes any current political position is itself radical. But radicalism, like Black queerness, is practice. You have to constantly do it in order to be radical. You have to constantly do it. Relation with people that practice Black queerness as Black queer because it is a mode of relation against patriarchy. Relation with people that practice radicalism is radical insofar as you are constantly unsettling the normative, the normative structures of domination. And lastly, Number seven; There is a film, Purple Rain, that stars Prince that we all know and there is a film based on Purple Rain, located in Nigeria, spoken in the Tuareg language titled, "Akounak Tedalat Taha Tazoughai". I think that's how you pronounce it. It's a Tuareg phrase that translates rain, the color of blue with a little purple in it. I think this difference between Purple Rain and Rain, the color of blue with a little red in it as beautiful, beautiful because it illustrates the ways that we have to search for language, for feeling, for familiarity. For the thing that is lost when we say something like there's no word for purple in that language, just because there is no word for it doesn't mean that it's not real, doesn't mean that it doesn't happen. Does it mean that it's not effective. We can find a light and joy in the gap between the space where difference is practiced and the fail to know. This delight and difference is what Black religion and the age of Trump, which is another way to say Black religion in the age of Thomas Jefferson, which is another way to say Black religion in the age of racial capitalism, anti-Black racism, and settler colonialism needs to rediscover in such a rediscovery will be a reckoning with the urgency of our times, times that span from 1492 at least to today. Let's rediscover our friendship. Thank you.

[00:17:19] **Corey D. B. Walker** Thank you, Ashon. Ashon opens us up to the practice of friendship. It's really a practice of relation, a practice of opening and not of closure, an attempted closure that attempts to manifest itself in our contemporary moment, the age of Trump, which necessarily implicates us in previous iterations. Jalane, your work, your work in light of, not only in Cuba, but your work now really challenges us to understand the closure that white supremacy has attempted to do for us to close us to particular to one particular moment. How do you begin to think about Black religion in the age of Trump in light of your work on race, on whiteness, and white supremacy?

[00:18:09] **Jalane Schmidt** Well, I should say that my work in Cuba, I looked at race and religion in Cuba, particularly the after effects of slavery. And I was struck there by the relatively fluid range of terms that are used to, afixed to certain skin tones and the presumed human characteristics of the people that have those specific physical features. But there was a range and that was just so different coming from the United States as a Black person who came of age during the 1970s, a small town in the Midwest. And that, you know, I'm actually mixed race in that, you know, the sorts of categories that were available in Cuba were not available here at that time. Now, that is kind of switched. And what what I found in my teaching was that when I would teach about race, I would particularly about persons of African descent. I kept bumping up against this category, which, of course, was the supposed antithesis of Blackness is whiteness. And I needed to start delving into that for the sake of my students, because they had a lot of questions as well. And I and I was interested myself and particularly here in the state of Virginia, where we we are leaders in so many things and in Virginia, fortunately. And one of them is that with the passage of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, this very stark color line was actually formed here. What we now know is this one drop rule, which, you know, there were only two categories. There was white and there was color such that even Native Americans and all other peoples were, it was a paper genocide, there was white and colored. And so I started teaching about whiteness and really, really delving into this into critical whiteness studies. What used to be was called in in critical whiteness studies, the kind of unmarked category, this assumed norm. And, you know, the elephant in the room or, you know, all these sorts of things. So I would think, you know, but what was an unmarked category and how I started teaching, when I started five or six years ago, teaching and researching and looking at whiteness. It's not an unwarranted category anymore. You know, when speaking about the age of Trump, when he came down that escalator, you know, in Trump Tower and announced his his campaign, this was in June 2015, you know, and we all remember the virulence of it, you know, Mexicans were rapists and murderers and all this. And it was just this Herald of the of the horrors, you know, of the Pandora's box that had been unleashed yet again. He didn't invent these things, of course, but gave that weapon. And I'm not suggesting that this is causal here, because, of course, there is a deep well of white supremacy. You know, from the foundations of what became United States. But it gives me pause to consider the fact that Trump announced his campaign. And then the very next day was Dylann Roof's rampage in Charleston, South Carolina, the killing, the assassination, really, of nine Black people, including state senator. So we could say a political assassination is in a literal sense. You know, the very next day, it just kind of violating that what was to be a sanctuary. You know, Mother Emanuel AME Church of was a very influential church. You know, the churches, Denmark Vasey, I believe was a, you know, was a member, you know, one of the planners of the Vasey rebellion in this. You know, so this this is a, you know, a kind of a nucleus of a Black gathering and Black political thought and action. And here it is just, you know, being kind of systematically taken out by this white supremacist who had been radicalized online, as so many are these days, you know. So this this, you know, virulence of white supremacy that just kind of crested, you know, during the Trump campaign and in 2015 and 2016. And then all through this this this time, you know, in some of the campaigns themselves that, you know, devolved into violence and some of the very perpetrators of that violence were on our streets in Charlottesville, I'm talking about the very same people, the actual same individuals on our streets in 2017 during the summer of hate. And it was as we were fortifying ourselves, that is those of us were anti-racist activists were fortifying ourselves in order to take to the streets, to planning counter demonstrations, and it was no accident that on the morning of the 12th, we started our day at the First Baptist Church here on Main. Founded by formerly enslaved people, you know, a very, you know, a very important institution here locally in the Black community. And it's no accident that we found ourselves there on that morning fortifying ourselves, you know, kind of partaking of the rich traditions of the Black church, in terms of song, you mentioned you know Ashon, the aesthetics that are political, you know, its fuel for the journey, and it you know fueled us out into the streets there. Would not be put down, would not be shot down by the Dylann Roofs or the inhabitants of the Oval Office, whoever they are. You know, but this well, you know, from from which we we gained strength, it is it propels us out. And this is where my thinking about my my work in Cuba, where I look at public events and race, you know, and performance in the streets. It's these these public events where we can actually see ourselves, you know, in public spaces and inhabiting public spaces and kind of asserting, you know, what kind of community, you know, that we are bringing into being in the midst of a very active theme there. You know, this this is something that, you know, it's an embodied sort of learning. It's it's a practice of being in resistance. This isn't something that you can kind of put on a back shelf or just think about it. You really actually have to embody it. But you can, and that's my take away.

[00:24:47] **Corey D. B. Walker** Thank you, Jalane. Jalane really places on the table how there is a way in which Black religion animates Black imagination about Black possibility, and that despite the continued assaults on Black humanity, that this imagination and possibility continues to escape in new and more dynamic ways. And in many ways it is embodied as communities come together and move out and new spaces and become the embodiment of new communities' emotion. Kai, I'm looking at you to pick up on this theme simply because your work reminds us of the ways in which Black religion forms a Black apocalypticism forms of Black Pan Africanism. Expand the pace, of the space of imagination. Talk to us a bit on how Black... how you think about this topic. The politics of Black religion in the age of Trump.

[00:25:50] **Kai Parker** Sure. Thanks so much, Corey. I think one of the important things to keep in mind is a theme that Ashon brought up that Jalane has talked about, the Black religion is constantly overcoming a sense preceding the attempts of white supremacy, a number of different forces of marginalization to to enclose it. And my research focuses on African-Americans in Chicago, particularly from the late 19th century through the 1960s when Martin Luther King came to Chicago. And one of the things you see in Black religion in Chicago is his attempt to overcome and to disrupt the forces of enclosure that Black people have experienced from redlining, to slum clearance, and urban renewal policies, and different forms of residential segregation. And one way that Black people did this was to think diasporically, to think in Pan-African terms and in terms of Black religion, one of the ways that this manifested itself was through what was called Ethiopianism. The idea that African-Americans, in particular African-American Christians, are not simply people who came to America with with a culture wiped out in the Middle Passage, and more kind of had been implanted by what was called the white man's religion into them. But actually, Black African-American Christianity is actually something that is rooted in Africa, and particularly as these Black Christians in Chicago thought in Ethiopia. And this idea fueled a number of very imaginative attempts to think about Black liberation and the relationship between Black liberation and the redemption of Black people through Jesus Christ. So this manifested itself in many different ways and across the first half of the 20th century. And one of the ways that it did so was through anti-fascist mobilization, the early part of 20 century of the rise of fascism in Europe. But it's often not remarked upon how popular fascism was beyond the shores of, say, Italy, beyond the boundaries of Germany or even Spain. And it's something that even quite literally washed upon the shores of Chicago in Lake Michigan. And so in the 1930s, Mussolini, fascist Italy invades Ethiopia. And this sparked massive amounts of protest of different kinds of organizing in Black churches in Chicago. And there's this whole movement about what do we do about this? How do we defend what they believe to be the the origin, the wellspring of Black Christianity? At that time, Ethiopia was looked upon by a lot of Black people as the one instance of Black sovereignty in the entire world at a time when Haiti was was just kind of ending a period where it had been under 20 years of US, neocolonial occupation, at a time when Liberia, which been established as a an attempt at a free liberal democratic, so to speak, Black state in Africa, had been had been ravaged by what was thought of as the slavery crisis and have been overrun by these different corporations of Firestone Rubber Corporation in particular. And so for all these reasons, Ethiopia seemed to be not only the the wellspring of Black Christianity, but also pointing the way towards a future, a future of potential for Black sovereignty. And so when the fascist Italy attacked it, there was a lot of of energy all around the diaspora to try to defend it. And so in Chicago, this manifested itself in many different ways. There were a group of Black Christians who had organized a Black air force, the fledgling Black air force. Black people were not allowed to fly in Chicago, not allowed to land in Chicago airports. So Black people built an airport outside of Chicago in a town called Robbins and built their planes and attempted to use this air force to fly to Ethiopia to fight Mussolini. And eventually only two Black people from from the Americas, or were living in the Americas, seem to have been able to make the journey. But both of them had deep ties to Black Chicago religion and particularly to a church Pilgrim Baptist Church and its pastor, Junius Caesar Austin. And so there are many different ways that Black Christians tried, attempted to defend Ethiopia. Ashon has talked about singing and music. And gospel music was something that was arising in Chicago at this time. And gospel music was infused with this Ethiopianist spirit where Thomas Dorsey or the great gospel composers at the time was leading massive choirs of hundreds of singers in songs such as Sing Sing Ethiopia Sing. That just shows how the depth of the anti-fascists Ethiopianist spirit in a city that was that was so far away and so distant and in a city in which Black people were facing myriad challenges just on a very local level. But despite those challenges, Black people were still thinking about how can we affect people all over the world who are suffering from different forms of oppression, forms of oppression. Things seem so different than what folks were experiencing in Chicago. And so there was also a bullets, not Bibles campaign, which was the product of this debate over should the Black Christians attempt to defend Ethiopia through a kind of evangelist, evangelist organizing around foreign missions? Or should Black people attempt to go over to Ethiopia and fight physically, or should Black people just kind of try to send the Emporer of Ethiopia Haile Selassie bullets? And so these debates were raging at the time. And they really point to the creativity and that of the protean character of how African-Americans have tried to think and combat the problem of anti-fascism through religion. So I think there's a lot of lessons about doing so and also doing so outside of the formal constrictions of, say, electoral politics or of the forces that dominate the mainstream normative political scene today that we can draw from. And there are two other points I just wanna mention briefly. That I think are important here. One is that Black, Black parishioners in Chicago tried to think of of anti-fascism as being necessarily tied to Black Redemption and Black Liberation. And so they attempted to be discerning about what forms of anti-fascism were connected directly to Black liberation and what forms of anti-fascism may not have been connected so directly. And so you have in 1935, is when Italy invades Ethiopia. And at the time, Black people seemed to be well in front of the, of the American consensus around foreign policy, which was still largely rooted in isolationism. There have been a lot of sympathy for a different fascist regimes in the West and as potential bulwarks, for example, against the Soviet Union. And so it seemed that just as with the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War, it seemed that in the 1930s, Black people were way out ahead of the kind of mainstream, even the progressive mainstream in relation to foreign policy. However, when World War 2 erupts and then later when the Cold War happens, Black people and churches attempted to be very discerning about to what degree are these policies connected to the attempt to defend Ethiopia from anti-fascists, from fascism, and to what degree are they not? Are they a transformation of that struggle into a struggle with different priorities that may not be as aligned with Black liberation? So I think it's important to keep that in mind when we think about how to defeat or how to combat the rise of fascism both domestically and abroad. The other thing is that it often was it was a struggle for Black religious folks in Chicago to make these kinds of distinctions. And one of the points to that is that in 1933, the Italian Air Force flew across the Atlantic and landed in Lake Michigan right outside of Chicago as part of the Chicago World's Fair, and the Air Force was celebrated by the mayor, the commander of the Italian Air Force, Italo Balbo was given the key to the city. They named a street after him that still stands, Balbo Drive now very near the newly christened Ida B Wells Drive, only 80 years afterwards. And many Black commentators said, you know, these fascist pilots are actually an example of the spiritual fortitude that Black people need in order to develop an air force in the way that these people have. And so, while it is the case that a couple years later, the same people were writing in very critical terms about Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. It's it was very contingent. It was contingent upon a number of other factors. So it's not, there's no inherent anti-fascism that we can just kind of reflexively believe in. And we always have to be, I think, critical of what's going on. You know, Ashon has pointed to the many ways in which Black religion has not always lived up to a truly capacious conception of Black liberation. So it's important to keep those those issues in mind, I think as we move forward and think about what are the religious resources for anti-fascism that we can draw upon at this moment.

[00:35:37] **Corey D. B. Walker** Thank you, Kai. Kai points us towards the contestatations around Black politics. Not only throughout the texture of Chicago, but also globally. And now we turn to Larycia. We are trying to figure out where's the future of Black religion and the future of Black religion in a moment where we are challenged by the narrowing of religious possibilities, where mobilisation around state politics to a particular identified religious identity is then being mobilized to a very regressive politics. And you, in 2015, you donned the hijab in solidarity with our Muslim sisters, and you were marked in a certain way and read in a certain way and your life changed. Talk to us a bit about that and how you begin to enter into this conversation: the politics of Black religion in the age of Trump.

[00:36:46] **Larycia Hawkins** Thanks, Corey. So on a bit of an autobiographical note, I was literally raised in the Black church. My grandfather was the pastor of my Black Baptist congregation in Oklahoma City where I was born, where I grew up. And my grandfather was an engineer who went to fight in World War Two, came home to be spit on, walking down the street and cashed in most of his retirement before he retired, he was in his thirties, to begin a church on the northeast side of Oklahoma City, historically Black side due to what we know as redlining, which was occurring. So this Black Baptist church became the fulcrum point of my early life, informed what I ended up studying, but I didn't know that at the time. I guess I woke up in grad school like, oh, I guess I'm studying myself. And at some point, while a professor at Wheaton College in Illinois, I started the college's first peace and conflict studies program. I have to add also autobiographically, because this is related to notions of Black Christianity in the past and the way that these inflect on the present that this college was a stop on the Underground Railroad. And I was the first Black woman to be tenured in the history of this college. Now, I say that because what began to develop within my teaching as a professor at an elite Christian liberal arts college and university was this theme of embodiment that Jalane referred to, all animated and informed by my own background in Black Christianity, which itself is inflected largely by the prophetic books of Scripture. And what does it look like for Black Americans to be that prophetic voice over and against power in the United States? So with that background in mind, as I'm sitting in a class, like this, teaching students in a political science department what it means to do justice in the public realm, which is a scriptural prophetic injunction, what does it look like then to live out Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount on which most of us are familiar with. I started talking about something I called embodied solidarity. What does it look like, not just to theorize about justice, but literally to do justice. In the political realm, Cornel West famously says love is what justice looks like in public. So at a Christian institution, how do we make that transition? How do we make that switch? And as professors, we've probably all served on a number of boards. And while you're gearing up for tenure, that becomes a way of serving university committees and boards. But what does it look like to be teaching about labor movements, but not part of it myself to be on the board of an Ecumenical Labor Organization? But while my friends, my comrades are picketing, I'm sitting in the classroom. And so embodied solidarity became the way of infusing an embodiment of those ideals and countering a tendency within Christianity, especially white Christianity. I was at a fairly white evangelical institution. Let's just be real, very white evangelical institution to counter this trend of Gnosticism, this notion that the body doesn't matter, that it's the spirit, the soul that is saved. As from fire, but that the body itself doesn't matter. So embodied solidarity was a way of thinking through and trying to counter and involve all of those things. Both in my pedagogy and in my profession and in my own personal life, this commitment to never make peace with oppression in the world. And so that performative aspect turned into putting this scarf literally on my head. And I put out a Facebook post. Facebook is kind of passé. My students, like you still on Facebook, Doc. Hawk, like, but Facebook was the way in 2015 still. And the post began something like, I don't love my Muslim neighbor because he or she is an American. I love them because they are formed with the same primordial clay. And I stand, so I stand in human solidarity. Secondarily, I stand in religious solidarity with my Muslim neighbor because they like me are people of the book. And we worship the same God as Pope Francis stated last week. He had been in the Central African Republic in solidarity with Muslims there who were being persecuted by Christians. And it was in that spirit that I wore the hijab throughout the Christian season of Advent. And as a way of living out this message of justice, this message of the Sermon on the Mount, in a time where candidate Donald Trump had just said five days earlier that he would enact a Muslim ban were he to become president. Following that announcement two days later or three days before that, excuse me, the precipitating reason for that was the San Bernardino shootings. And following that, Jerry Falwell Junior down the road at Liberty University said during chapel, for those of you who aren't familiar, chapel is like mandatory church at Christian schools. He said from chapel, if those Muslims in San Bernardino walked in here, if everyone was carrying what I have in my back pocket, we could end those Muslims before they end us, meaning a gun. And by the way, we offer gun certification classes on campus. So it was that moment where the epigenetic tripwire went off in me. The trauma shut up in my bones, as we say, in the Black church. That was what motivated me to wear a hijab on my head. And I called this embodied solidarity because our solidarity, what the gospel looks like to me, is putting feet to faith. So when we think about Wyatt Tee Walker and the inheritance of Black religion, it's an inheritance for me that comes out of what we call Theodyssey as opposed to theology, a systemization of belief orthodoxy. Theodyssey is developing meaning out of suffering and the group that optimizes this most in the United States, in my mind, beyond First Nations and indigenous folk, from a very different kind of vantage point and tradition them and Black folk. Out of that tradition of the religion of the oppressor, turning those narratives on their head, right. Counter, a counter frame to the frame of the slave catechism, which said, what is your chief end in life, slave? To obey my master. And so Black religion has always since that, since its inception. And certainly there are various other forms of Black religiosity in the United States as an inheritance of those who came, who were force forcibly migrated to the shores of the United States. So those are some of the inheritances of Black religion. As a political scientist, I also think that Black Christianity, in particular, offers different views of the relationship between church and state and religion and politics because of a lack of binary between sacred and secular. And so the ways that Black religious, religious folk think about these themes means that the way that politics plays out is more pragmatic and that we see different kinds of politics emanating out of Black churches than white evangelical churches, even though both tend to interpret scripture in similar ways; those pragmatics of culture. I think another theme of embodied solidarity is important. Your great segway from thinking about Chicago to thinking about the ways that this has played out over time. One way that MLK Jr.'s life was changed was by spending time in Chicago. He lived in West Lawndale, North and West Lawndale of Chicago. And what that taught him was what he couldn't know as a child of the South, about poverty and suffering in the center of Chicago. And it was that kind of lived suffering that led to the poor people's campaign. So embodying solidarity with the least and the last on the West side of Chicago is what culminated in the last speech that we have from MLK, that prophetic vision of the Promised Land. His insistence that he might not get there, but that he could see it in the distance, that was informed and inflected by his time and embodied solidarity with those on the west side of Chicago. I think the last religious image I'll leave you with, is one of the Black church is really emblematic of how to push the body of, the body politic forward as an image of the body of Christ, the Eucharist as an image, the body of Christ, a living sacrifice. A canonic outpouring on behalf of the other, because what ultimately embodied solidarity is it's always for the other. And from a position of oppression. And it's where all hierarchies are leveled and consumed as we consume in the Christian tradition, the body of Christ. So that pouring out on behalf of one another is also imagined in embodied solidarity, while embodied solidarity in the case of wearing a hijab, in solidarity with Muslim women, was an individual act. It's meant to be an act that emanates and resonates towards other groups, not necessarily for oneself, but for others.

[00:47:21] **Corey D. B. Walker** So thank you so much. Our conversational partners have really set a wonderful feast in front of us with a number of different themes, and I want to begin with a question for any of you to take a stab at. Open up the conversation a bit more. From all of our presentations, what we realized and what... what dawns on me is that there is a theme of openness, theme of relationality, theme of practice, just some preoccupation, theoretical preoccupation, but a series of practices that continue to deepen a notion of hospitality to the differences that are with us. And these differences are deep. They are dynamic and they're generative of new forms of community. How do we hold fast to certain, though, that vision, those ideals in a moment where we're seeing the virtual collapse of any dynamic conversation around religion in the public sphere? Religion is being dominated by forms of Christian nationalism, mapped onto forms of white supremacy, forms of patriarchal heteronormativity, forms that continue to exalt the marginalization of those who are impoverished as well as globally forms that continue to exalt American empire. How do we begin to change the very dynamics of this public conversation? How do we begin to understand this moment as not only one connected to other moments, but something singular and new? What we're seeing right now in this age of Trump? All of ya'll have said something.

[00:49:20] **Jalane Schmidt** Some people say that, we can't, in the age of Trump, if we ever could. But certainly now, we can't rely on the state, just can't be looking to state models to solve our problem. The Department of Justice is not going to come riding, riding in on a white horse. Think about the civil rights movement. King's, you know, negotiating with Bobby Kennedy and there's the DOJ and they're trying to... It's like that's not happening, you know. So if the state, you know, is effectively, you know, cut off as an option, or at least certainly at the national level that we need to scope in our discussion, you know, more toward the local, you know. You know, that's something that's closer or something that we have more purchase upon or leverage within we should say. And so that, you know, again, I mean, that that makes it kind of a circle of solidarity is kind of more visible. There's vision and, you know, metaphors, and we can actually physically reach people again. You know, in this coming together. So I think, the age of Trump as your calling it and I think it forces us to look closer in our communities to what solidarity looks like in a very local sense.

[00:50:54] **Larycia Hawkins** I completely agree. I think that Ashon has pointed out a lot of the complications, like where Black, the Black church, speaking generically, has a lot of work to do. I also think about scholars, including kind of public intellectuals like Ta-Nehisi Coates and the rise of Afro-pessimism. I would say on a personal level, as a scholar of Black religion and as an adherent myself, I think to go back to MLK. I think one of the things that MLK posits for us and as a good friend of mine says you can't have a doctor without the reverend. Right?. So a PhD rooted in a Black church sensibility, there was a level, I just read a great political theory piece about distrust and in the distrust of democracy, the distrust of justice happening on the wheels of inevitability. The beautiful language from the Letter from Birmingham Jail. Right? The letter that precedes that, I believe it was before that chronologically, to the white moderate. Right. A lack of hope in the wheels of democracy. Yet a consonant hanging his hat on the promise of liberalism. Now neo-liberalism. Right. So we have... the Black church has always held those contradictions in tandem. Right. The push pull of the promise laid out by Alexis de Tocqueville, of Democracy in America, then Gunnar Myrdal's assertion, the great sociologist, that the lingering problem of the Negro and his hope that it would be resolved quickly. 50 years later, when does the United States become a democracy? A polyarchy? According to many, many political scientists, never. Because it hasn't met the ideal conditions of a polyarchy. Given the multiple contradictions within the American creed, one of the things that currently concerns me and one that didn't come up is the eruption of what's called the prosperity gospel within the Black church. It's a countervailing tendency and I haven't run any numbers. But if you've been paying attention to the elections and this is not discounting the kind of local level, in sense of collective solidarity's that needs to happen, many of them emanating out of the local church is Black support for Bloomberg. Sorry I had to get political. I'm a political scientist. That's that countervailing force. That while Black Americans are pragmatic and this stems out of that theodyssey tradition. What's also become true in the 2000s is the rise of a prosperity gospel that is racial capitalism. The American dream wrapped up in a big dollar bill bow. And that has crept into the Black church. So while the Black church remains a source of hope. In many Black communities, it's the only property that is owned. It's the only thing where the mortgage has been paid. Most Black churches have a ceremony where they burn the mortgage. It's still one of the only places in many Black communities where someone is educated, to this day. And so the Black church, as what one sociologist calls a kind of semi involuntary institution that whether you're Christian or not, remains a vital institution in Black communities. Remains. And the great danger to the Black church is capitalism. The American dream and the pretense held there in. And so, yeah, the local level, because all politics is local, but also this notion that Black politics is the only way or one of the... Black churches, one of the routes to Black politics is true. And MLK held out I think back to that notion of distrust, which is tragic. But he also held out a tragic hope which pushes back against the Afro-pessimist kind of notion that we see prevalent throughout academia today.

[00:55:45] **Ashon Crawley** Just one reason why I focus on friendship is because I think on the one hand, I tell my Muslim sisters they are my sisters, that they teach me how to be a good agnostic, actually, that they teach me how to be caring and loving and just. My progressive Christian friends teach me how to be caring, loving, and just. That is people who do not have the same sort of worship orientation that I do. That's still models for me that friendship is possible and if friendship is possible, iIf relation is possible, then it means that we can actually rediscover a kind of radical potentiality that would resist the kind of what seems to be this very, very heightened desire for capitalist consumption as proof of blessing, prosperity gospel. That on the one hand you are contending with histories of peoples who have been excluded from institutions like the medical industrial complex, such that you have to pray literally for your divine healing because hospitals won't like take care of Black women. And so it's like we can't dismiss on the one hand the way Prosperity Gospel has a kind of history that is deeply enmeshed in the kind of medical, the racist medical industrial complex on the one hand. Also saying that, yeah, but the solution to that isn't to then subsume yourself within a kind of understanding of health, wealth and and blessing that doesn't interrogate the actual structures of domination that produce the medical industrial complex as racist or, you know, like there's all the celebration of like going to college. I mean I went to college. Obviously, I'm a professor, so like going to college. I don't think of as a bad thing. But if that comes to replace the work of justice, then then we have sort of lost the kind of radical potentiality because we think, well, the Black church was radical in the past, so it must be radical today. The things that it does today is rooted in sort of the radical history. And so if it's against home, it's if it's a gift for queer people today, that must be also evidence of its radicality. It's like, well, know that you have to renew that mode of radicality constantly. And so when I talk to like Black Lives Matter folks who like, yeah, I don't go to church, and it's one because of lack of religious chauvinism, that that reduces religiosity to a very specific kind of prosperity gospel Christianity. But it's also like there is no sort of way to acknowledge, like the Black Buddhists and the Black atheist and the Black agnostics and the Black Muslims. And like, how can we actually begin to practice friendship in the service of saying that the local level is what matters politically, it's what matters economically. And that local level of the practice of a kind of friendship which is relationally will also have the capacity to charge our imaginations for for understanding that this sort of political economic system and destructive domination isn't the thing that we have to submit to. And so that's why for me, like friendship is like this thing that I constantly go to because you don't know what it's gonna be in the end. All you can do is sort of commit to trying to do the thing together with other folks. And so that's what to me is like what's so important. And I feel like that's what's lost, which is why, like, you know, people really will sell it. You know, Yolanda Adams singing for Bloomberg is deeply offensive to me because it's like, well, the only thing that he has literally is money. And like that is supposed to somehow replace like the kind of struggling towards justice that understanding of mode of relationality, I think, would actually push against at least.

[00:59:48] **Larycia Hawkins** And a good way of feeding back into that is, I don't think it's one or the other. In fact, I believe just to piggyback on that, interfaith movements are striving towards that kind of friendship, which obviously or not obviously, I've become more involved in those. And also the ways that the Black church, because of theodyssey, there is a seed of prosperity gospel in the traditional Black churches. This you know, the testimony that I didn't have money for the light bill and Jesus provided money for the light bill. That can be interpreted as prosperity gospel but the ways that prosperity gospel can be harmful if they play into the individualist narrative that's counter to collective liberation and collective justice. And so when I was talking about the Black church still being fundamentally important to these movements, solidarity movements, whatever they look like, it's partially because of that narrative that Ashon identified: that collective justice and liberation narrative. Interestingly, I also studied Black Catholic parishes because I was attracted to the notion of liberation theologies and study of famous Black Catholic parish on the west side of Chicago, that's featured in Spike Lee's film, Chi-Raq. It's a real church with a white priest who was schooled, mentored by Black Baptist ministers. So his cadence, his tone, this Black Catholic parish serves Eucharist to people who are not Catholic. That's a no no. But the ways that this is infused, that justice movement can be infused in other forms of religiosity, not just the Black Protestant church.

[01:01:38] **Corey D. B. Walker** And there's a geneology that'll draw from Virginia Union, from Samuel DeWitt Proctor to Wyatt Tee Walker, and, of course, to Reverend Jeremiah Wright through Bank Street Memorial Baptist Church here in Norfolk to Corey Walker. So, small world. But I wanna, I want to get back to something that Jalane, so Jalane started off with and we sort of wrapped around it that we're in a moment now where we can't rely on the state, that the state, as a response to the exigencies of Black life, is unresponsive in this moment because of the particular capture of the state by a dominant white supremacist logic, Christian supremacy. How do we and the local then offers us a way of thinking about new modes of solidarity, new modes of friendship, new modes of community. But we're facing issues that are not only local, but they are global. And I think one big issue, there's a big issue around environmental justice, around climate change or climate changed in the past tense that really focuses us to begin to think through what are the resources that we then can mobilize, how do we then scale these particular modalities to express solidarity, even in this moment where such solidarity can be, can cause us to place our lives at risk. In this moment, the retreat, the turn to the local may then open up new possibilities for a global... for global solidarity. What resources does religion in a in its best case offer us and what resorce...? What are the limitations that religion offers us? We begin to talk about that, but how do we deal with these global systemic issues in our moment in the heart of the empire?

[01:03:47] **Kai Parker** I think there is some research, some resources within Black religion that that can speak to certain certain issues that the ecological crisis has has has brought forth recently. Part of it is that when you look at the history of environmentalism in the US, it was actually Jim Crow that enabled environmentalism to become a kind of nationwide issue of the Audubon Society, the conservation movement had been attempting to pass environmental regulations in southern states, they didn't want any part of it. In the 19th century, once Jim Crow was institutionalized, they were able to ally with with white supremacist governments that had arisen to pass legislation as keeping Black people from ruining the environment. And so for example, Alabama had this game and game and fish law that regulated hunting. And it was, and essentially it was sold as trying to protect the environment, but also instituted a bird day where white children would be in school learning about birds while Black children were were outside picking cotton. And basically the idea was that creation is was created by God for white people. And Black people's role into creation is to cultivate cotton and nothing else. And so when we look at that history, it reminds us that even though there's been this turn towards thinking about the Anthropocene human created world. It's important to think seriously about how marginalized people are being thought about when people are thinking so globally, and there's a lot of eco fascist movements that are arising in Europe, for example, and they're tying immigration restrictions and nativism to the questions of who who actually has ownership over the planet. So, I mean, these are issues that the Black religion has challenged I think in a variety of different ways. One was the idea that Black people's engagement with the earth is not only, should only be constrained to the the ways that Black people have been compelled to compelled to work in a racial capitalist economy and ecology. And so there's a number of examples of that. But I think what it points to is that, for one the kind of political theology that animates ultimately a lot of environmentalism, even though a lot of that has been forgotten, I think. But also the ways that that we have to focus on the marginalized, and even though there's atempts, to think that, to say that, you know, as humans, we are all in this together in a certain kind of way. There's ways in which that rhetoric can be mobilized so that the earth is protected for some people and not for others. And it's important for us to keep that in mind.

[01:06:38] **Corey D. B. Walker** Anyone else?

[01:06:38] **Corey D. B. Walker** Well, I'm going to open it up to our audience. I'm sure that our conversationalists have opened up some questions for you. I... Course I have some more, but I want to open up for the opportunity for you to join the conversation. Question right over here.

[01:07:02] **Audience Member #1** Thank ya'll very much. Oh, sorry. This really inspiring conversation. So a colleague of mine teaches up at Harvard, Brandon Terry's a political theorist. We were talking about Trump's election and he said it's the odd thing about this election is Trump ran, the least anti-Black Republican presidential campaign of the 20th century, potentially because... for Trump it was about the M&M's. It's about the Mexicans and the Muslims. And so we talk about Black religion in the age of Trump. And this has come up several times. How do you then extend this when at least in this election, Black people are not the main boogeyman, at least explicitly?

[01:07:41] **Ashon Crawley** I mean, I think we have to contend with the ways that you have the thing that talks about like the problem of perfectibility and like the idea that we're always self-correcting. And one of the things I try to say is that, it's not that sort of anti-immigration rhetoric and anti-Muslimness has come to replace anti-Black racism and it hasn't replaced settler colonialism, which is ongoing. Indigenous people are still saying ya'll are on this land and this is... you are against our own sovereignty. So like settler colonialism is ongoing, anti-Black racism is ongoing. And what's happening is that that in the in the desire to purrfect the practice of racial capitalism, what it's doing is it's just engulfing more people within its reach. And so now it's like, oh, we're also going to include the Muslims and we're gonna think of a Muslim as only like a thing that comes from over there without thinking about the fact that most of the Muslims that exist in the United States are Black Muslims who were born here. And so, like we kind of forget that Black Islam or that Islam in the United States is a Black religion. And we constantly think of it as a foreign religion because of a kind of forgetfulness. And so like what happens is that we are constantly sort of enlarging the practices of of of violence, including more people, and also asking them to like agree with us, like, yeah, the Black people are the problem. Right. And it's like, so. So you want to, on the one hand, say Black folks are the problem while also trying, like Trump is trying to appeal to Black people while also saying that Black people are kind of a problem. And Bloomberg is trying to appeal to Black people while also saying that stop and frisk is just a thing that ya'll needed to do because like. And so for me, what seems to keep happening is the the widening of the scope of the practice of violence that is constantly being perfected in anti indigenous and anti-Black racist practices. And it doesn't replace those things. It just comes to enlargen who gets to be engulfed in those practices of violence. And we have to pay attention to what is allowable, what we allow to happen to indigenous people and what we allow to happen to Black people, specifically Black women, specifically Black trans women. Because if we pay attention to what we allow to happen to the most marginalized, we'll see what the state actually wants to do to all of us. And it's not because it will think then that, you know, we don't need Black people anymore. It's that it's constantly, the nature of the state is to produce violence. And so it's constantly trying to target peoples in order to produce that violence. So that's what I think is happening.

[01:10:34] **Corey D. B. Walker** No one else want to had anything. Any other questions?

[01:10:46] **Audience Member #2** In terms of speaking on Black religion during this time, how do you incorporate now like the changing religious demographic of this country where a lot of people are kind of identifying as more spiritual and less religious? How do you incorporate that as to the religious identity of this nation? And kind of how that also is affected during the age of Trump?

[01:11:07] **Corey D. B. Walker** Everyone hear that? At a moment where we seemingly have over abundance of a particular type of religion in American public sphere, we're also seeing the ways in which religion is beginning to desegregate from just one thing, too many things. And it's not just religion and it's institutionalized expression, but practice as a spirituality, particularly these generational differences that we're seeing. How do we respond to that?

[01:11:36] **Jalane Schmidt** I mean, there's a relationship between the kind of fascist nationalism, you know, that is on the ascendancy and the fact that more and more people are disaffiliated from formal religious structures. I mean, if you ask the polling data with the so-called nones, by which I mean N-O-N-E-S those who have no... the nones, none. Affiliation is none. Yeah. Especially, you know, kind of millennial age folks. A lot of them point to the fact that, you know, kind of the religion capital R is it as it's often presented in the public sphere as this, you know, very patriarchal or, you know, kind of a certain very narrow, actually very narrow slice of white evangelicalism. And that's very right wing. Anyway, so a lot of the folks who have disaffiliated actually point to that, you know, that that this is, in fact, the problem. You know that. And, you know, kind of voted with their feet, you know. As it were, you know.

[01:12:36] **Corey D. B. Walker** Question, right here.

[01:12:49] **Audience Member #3** I just find it so vitally important that Trump ends his presidency after one term that I'm finding myself just looking for who will most easily beat Trump. I mean, I have thought about all the different candidates, but I'm losing my concern for the analysis of their differences to the election, to the wind and I'm curious. I haven't really heard any of you sound like that it would be a viewpoint for you because you seem to portray that you're more concerned about what's true and real and justice for you. And and I'm just curious for you to comment on it.

[01:13:59] **Corey D. B. Walker** Well, she put the question out on the floor; its right there in the middle. Someone has to go for it. Look. Are ya'll so concerned about truth, justice, freedom, imagination, that the reality of the situation is that we have everyday politics and a very real sense that the politics and policies coming out of Washington, coming out of Richmond, out of Charlottesville, shaped and inform the ways in which we live every day. How do we how do we begin to think through both of them or begin to tease them out so that we don't have what seemingly is, to our audience that there is this gulf between the two, make perhaps there is that the way in which you think about justice informs the ways in which you engage in certain forms of electoral politics?

[01:14:54] **Kai Parker** Well, I grew up in New York City when I was one of those Black teenagers, 16 to 25, that Michael Bloomberg talks about a lot and you know, I mean, that experience, which was much more of my friends than it was me in many ways, really kind of for me, natural. It almost kind of naturalized police brutality as just kind of a fact of life, and I was like my father grew up in Jim Crow in rural North Carolina. And he once said that, it wasn't until a moment in 1959 that he that he realized that there was some possibility of Jim Crow changing. Before then it just seems like it can go on for a hundred more years and even after Brown v Board and whatnot. And I thought about that that a lot just in relation to reflecting back on that time, because I think that my my friends and I were were very upset about what was going on. But I mean, the idea of any kind of horizon beyond that, I don't even I don't think was really in my mind. So when I was, a few years ago, just watching, like watch, following the protests in Baltimore in particular around around about Freddie Gray's when the police violence against Freddie Gray. And just following how those high school kids were just doing this organizing and thinking seriously, I just I was blown away by it, by by the consciousness that they had. I don't think I had at all at that time. I bring up to kind of say that I think it's important to think about how the national discourse, the national discourse is very much shaped by these local experiences. And I mean, if we look at the way that a number of candidates have conducted themselves in terms of local politics, it blurs some of the distinctions between various regimes that can in some cases appear to have different kind of levels of of of anti Blackness. But it's a little bit less clear when we think about the local and even I'm thinking about there was this woman, [01:16:58]Irma Lee Jordan, [0.4s] who is living near near Martin Luther King in the west side of Chicago, who was living between two massive new housing projects just gone up in the 60s in Chicago. And she wrote to King and asked him basically she was writing it, that she was trying to be a follower for Christ. But it was difficult because the rent basically the she was receiving, she was on the aid to Families with Dependent Children and the money she was receiving. She was in low income private housing and the money she was receiving was just enough, so she was struggling to pay her rent. And the idea was that this was part of this is to incentivize these women to basically have these sensible, you know, whatever is to kind of work their way out of, out of this situation. And this is at the height of the Great Society. You know, while Martin Luther King is in Chicago and what that exchange has points to is that these issues, you know, that these issues have existed. This is in the Great Society that have been, they're considered in the New Deal, is something that exists under neo-liberalism. But I think one thing the Black religion does allow us to do is to think about what are some of the fundamental things that have to change so that so that we're not kind of running between, you know, from from oligarchs to oligarchs to find some way out of this situation that we're in. And so those are some of the resources I think we can draw from historically.

[01:18:14] **Larycia Hawkins** And also as a political scientist, I... since I brought up the Bloomberg case. I think it's also important to note that Black voters are sophisticated voters and they don't use simplistic heuristics. They didn't just vote for Obama because he was Black, because they were against Obama before they were for Obama. They were for Hillary Clinton because she was a proven candidate quantity. Right. And I say that because something implied in the question is, don't we just want to defeat Trump at all costs? Yes, but I'll tell you why. Because for people who look like all of us up here and the people that Ashon mentioned previously, it's life and death. And the question of genocide and holocaust is not very far from my mind as someone who also studies Rwanda and who is very linked to interfaith groups and Muslims are now on the target. Religious freedom is code for white evangelical Christians. That's who it's reserved for. And so when I think about the dog whistles. Right. Perhaps they're not. Perhaps the president is not explicitly calling out Black folk, except in a backhanded way. "The Blacks love Trump." He is talking about us and he's talking about the alternative to the disdain that those that he's put in that category that he doesn't want, is that we join that white Christian nationalist group. That's not an alternative. And so whether one is spiritual or not and of the Black diaspora, one understands the resources that the Black church has historically provided. So Black lives matter can say all they want they're not religious. But guess what? They're inheritors of a great tradition that emanated in the sacred. Those songs that propelled the drumbeat of the civil rights movement, they're the drumbeat of Black Lives Matter. Right. And so no, one need not adhere to those old forms that are sexist and ablest and heterosexist and on and on and on. Some of these religious institutions need to die before they resurrect in new forms that are more inclusive. But the staying power of religion in civil society is something that I think in the American context is quite exceptional compared to the rest of the world, if we look at Europe, for example, in terms of the life of Christianity. And so I'm not making a case for Black religion, per say, but I am talking about the historicity and the sociality, the ways that in the politicalness of Black religious institutions, as some things that have really been key to to our longevity and that longevity is seriously threatened in an existential way.

[01:21:38] **Corey D. B. Walker** I want to thank all of our panelists for... Thanks for joining us for today's conversation. And I want to invite each of you to continue to join us as we convene tomorrow at the University of Richmond. And we'll begin with an open reception at six o'clock and then we'll have a public conversation with the Reverend Canon Naomi Tutu and of course, all day on Friday. I want to leave you with one thought from the Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker, The Womb of Revolution and Wyatt Tee Walker states, "Serious revolution is total. Maintains a question mark over every aspect of society, and no institution is taken for granted. Total revolution not only seeks to tear down specific evil, but senses that structures which allow and endorse evil must also change." In many ways, we're gonna track that and allow that to inform our conversations for the next two days. Thank you and have a great afternoon.