

Preface

1. Thanks for invitation – Rodney et al.
2. Thanks for working being done
3. Thanks for individual contributions

Introduction

1. We enter into the fourth month of America's health, wealth, and stealth crisis. It's a health crisis, because COVID-19 is the worse pandemic we've seen in 100 years with some of the worse leadership we've seen in our country's History, compounded by the worst death figures among developed countries. We have a President and governors, who say they are trying to keep the economy alive, but only succeed in killing thousands of people and killing the economy they were supposed to be saving. It's a wealth crisis, because thousands of renters and small landlords are likely to find out that while America is excellent at repeatedly bailing out the wealthy, it soon grows tired of bailing out the middle class and the poor. And that stealth crisis is an allusion to the origin of the world stealth which is unsurprisingly steal. What do we do about the stealing of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness from native Americans, African slaves, and poor colored immigrants who could never quite get on that escalator called the American dream? What does a nation do about stolen land, stolen labor, stolen lives, stolen liberty—especially when those pesky cellphone cameras will not let you get away with saying, “This is all in the past; let's just move on from here.” What do you do when you wake up from electing the first Black president and discover that all your articles and conversations about being postracial were really silly! As a nation, you're not postracial, you're not even postracist!

None of us is going to forget 2020 anytime soon and we're not halfway through this year. When this year began, could anyone have imagined that within less than 3 months we would be dealing with viruses and vigilante violence; with pandemics and with police run amok? Could

anyone have foreseen what I call “the trifecta of trauma”—first, COVID-19 (the worst pandemic in a century); second, economic meltdown, with unemployment at rates not seen since the Great Depression; and third, social unrest, not seen since the 1960s, in response to police and vigilante violence?

2. As many have said, there is pain—deep pain. Pain for the grieving family of Ahmaud Arbery, another young black man who didn’t know that jogging while Black is an offense punishable by death at the hands of southern white vigilantes; pain for the grieving family of Breonna Taylor, who just missed her 27th birthday on June 5, because she was shot 8 times by police serving a no-knock warrant in the middle of the night; pain for family of George Foley who didn’t understand that being picked up by the police in Minneapolis could be a death sentence and that a northern white police officer named Derek Chauvin had no scruples about taking your life slowly while cameraphones recorded every excruciating moment.

3. Thank God, millions have marched across this country and around the world with slogans that were deeply controversial just months earlier —“Black Lives Matter,” “No Justice, No Peace”, “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot.” Thank God, the NFL decided that athletes can have a conscience and exercise their 1st Amendment right to free speech. Thank God, even President Trump started out talking about the injustice of the situation, then, as expected, flipped-flopped, completely missed the point as the Secret Service clear away peaceful protestors so he could have a photo-op with a Bible, and has now reverted to overtly racist appeals to his white-nationalist and law-and-order base. And I want to sincerely thank this generation of protestors for not making the same mistake my generation made when we lit up over 160 American cities and towns between 1964 and 1968; in some cases, it took us 40 years to repair the damage to our own communities.

4. The quest for justice will be long and hard. And we're just beginning the deeper and more difficult work of dismantling centuries of the deeply embedded mythology of white supremacy, centuries of messages about black violence and black criminality. There's all that Amy Cooper work that can and must be done and, God knows, it's not just Amy's problem; it's all of our problem.
5. In all of this, I find myself to be of a little different mind than many people. This past election, this current Administration, and this current crisis have sharpened, for all to see, the American (and one might argue, global) fault lines around race, religion, gender, class, sexual identity, and immigration status in a way that is absolutely undeniable. While I'm certainly not jubilant about the damage that has been and is being done, I'm also not depressed. That is in large part because I'm actually hopeful that we can wake up from what I would call the post-racial (or more broadly post-injustice) illusion, induced with the election of America's first African-American President in 2008, and actually get busy with the work of making America better for people of every race, religion, gender, class, sexual identity, and immigration status.
6. Let me suggest that, if we are going to make the most of the present moment, make the greatest strides toward freedom, we are going to have to do the work that my fellow-speakers have outlined and will outline. And through it all we must be clear about the fact we will have to deal with issues of dignity and issues of power and we will have to do that at the personal, relational, institutional and societal level.

Dignity

1. On matters of dignity, treat yourself to the writing of Dr. Donna Hicks from the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. I say Amen when she writes: "People have a difficult time

letting go of being treated badly. And if indignities are not directly named, acknowledged, and redressed—which they rarely are at the negotiating table—they take on an invisible energy of their own, showing up in the form of obstacles to a fair and equitable agreement.”¹ The unnamed violations of dignity are the elephant, the gorilla, the ghost in the room at your next holiday family meal, the Paris climate change talks, your congregational meetings, the next homicide or shooting in the city of Boston, and this rally.

2. It’s a lesson I learned in my own work on the streets of Boston with the Ten Point Coalition—a group of Christian clergy and lay people established in 1992 to address the needs of proven-risk youth of color in greater Boston, with a particular focus on ending interpersonal violence. [Story of shoot-out in Kenmore Sq.]. It’s a lesson I’ve also learned in my work as a pastor, mediating disputes between members and finding time and again as I traced the thread of anger, hurt and conflict back through the long line of conversations and miscommunications.
3. Dr. Hicks is absolutely correct when she writes: “Dignity is different from respect. Dignity is a birthright. We have little trouble seeing this when a child is born; there is no question about children’s value and worth. If only we could hold onto this truth about human beings as they grow into adults, if only we could continue to feel their value, then it would be so much easier to treat them well and keep them safe from harm. Treating others with dignity, then, becomes the baseline for our interactions. We must treat others as if they matter, as if they are worthy of care and attention.”² Others as an end and not a means to our own ends—whether those ends be personal, political, or professional

¹ Hicks, Donna (2011-09-06). *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict*. Yale University Press. Kindle Edition.

² Hicks, Donna (2011-09-06). *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict* (p. 4). Yale University Press. Kindle Edition.

4. Dr. Hicks goes on to elaborate Ten Essential Elements and the Ten Violations as a wonderful way of taking the abstract concept of dignity and making that word flesh—making that word come alive in ways that I can see and touch and talk about concretely; in a way that allows me to look at the things I say, the actions I do and evaluate whether they enhance or diminish the dignity of others and/or myself; in a way that allows me to understand the unseen dynamics that hinder or help the building of community, the maintenance of relations, the negotiation of conflict, the healing of ancient wounds, the establishing of radical reconciliation.

Dignity and Racial Justice Movements

1. Racial justice movements have always attended to issues of dignity but they have also been clearly and overtly about address issues of power—dignity and power in tension with one another, dignity and power in balance with one another, dignity and power in a complementary and complicated dance. Furthermore, I want to suggest that racial justice is impossible without serious attention to the restoration of dignity and the equitable sharing of power.
2. Let me put this in yet another way that I hope you will keep in mind as you hold discussions around your tables:
 - a. The recognition of another’s dignity is not a substitute for the sharing of power
 - b. The sharing of power without a recognition of the other’s dignity is a recipe for future conflict.
3. And so I want to suggest that the questions I and we must ask as we come to the table of community today are these, “How do we affirm and enhance the dignity of others and ourselves and how much power are we willing to build together and share to make that dignity not just an intrinsic attribute, but an experience in our daily living?”

We're in This Thing Together

1. These are the questions I believe we have to wrestle with, because, given the challenges we face in our local communities, our country, and our world, if ever there was a time to pull together it is now. But only the naïve will fail to notice that there is resistance to that notion, a deep and growing resistance, fueled by racism and misogyny, Islamophobia and Antisemitism, xenophobia and homophobia, topped off with a healthy dose of good old-fashioned fear.
2. Somebody, like the somebodies in this room, has to confront this fear and resistance to change with the simple truth that as residents of Massachusetts, America, and the planet Earth, we are in this thing together. Somebody must remind us of those words spoken by Ben Franklin to the signers of the Declaration of Independence as he declared: “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall hang separately.” Somebody must remind this nation that the babies we do not immunize together today will be the sources of our needless epidemics tomorrow. Somebody must declare that the children, urban or suburban, that we do not educate today we will face as defendants in the courts, as clients in the unemployment lines, and as poorly trained employees in the workforce of tomorrow; that the drug or gun violence crisis we do not address together in the inner-city today will visit us in the suburbs and rural communities tomorrow; that the criminal justice and law enforcement inequities and violence that we don't address today will give us an increasingly unsafe and unstable society tomorrow; that the environmental issues that we do not clean up or prevent today together will cause the diseases, disabilities, and disasters of tomorrow; that the oppression or occupation, existential threat, or colonial conditions we fail to address with courage and a deep regard for the dignity of others together will play out in horrific, bloody and terroristic ways tomorrow.

3. Like it or not, we're in this thing together and we can make a difference. But it will be our challenge to tell this vital, but sometimes complicated story to a world more attuned to the sound bite than to a sound argument. Like it or not, we're in this thing together and we can make a difference. And it will be our challenge to change ourselves as we change our world. Change at a time when our nation has every reason to wonder whether a country composed of abused Native Americans, descendants of slaves, and immigrants from every corner of the globe is the stuff of dreams or the reality of nightmares; at a time like this there is the temptation to throw in the towel and quit cause healing is one of the hardest things you will ever do.

4. And we will have to pursue this conversation in a world more attuned to the sound bite than to a sound argument. The choice really is ours—ours to choose whether we remove the yoke of oppression and become what MLK called “the drum majors for justice.” We're in this thing together. Ours to choose whether we are paralyzed by fear or are energized by a faith in God and in one another. We're in this thing together. Ours to choose whether the gifted and the blessed among us are willing to share their power and resources with those less blessed, because we are in this thing together. It's ours to choose and I pray that we choose and then find a way to help others choose to believe that we are in this thing together and that together we can really put flesh on the bones of those words, “all men and women and boys and girls of every race and nation and immigrant status; of every class and sexual identity; they are created equal and they are endowed with rights and liberties.” A slaveowner wrote those words and now it falls to the descendants of slaves and slaveowners, native Americans and immigrants from every corner of the globe to make those words worth more than the paper they're written on. That's why we're here today and I thank you for partnering with me in one of the hardest things any of us will ever do and we will do it because we must do. God bless you.

Addenda

1. That's why in the words of the great Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," we cannot afford to be "drunk with the wine of the world." There is so much that can cause us and others to fall asleep on our watch. There's fear become denial that makes us want to hide our heads in the sand and pretend, like a child, that if I don't see it, it doesn't exist. We do this all the time on the personal level. "If I'm getting up and going to work every day, I can't really be an alcoholic or an addict; if I just take a little and nobody knows, it can't be stealing; "We're grown, we can do what we want to do and it'll be alright." How easily we can fool ourselves with intoxicating words of denial.
2. And this doesn't just operate on the personal level. America regularly gets drunk on the wine of the world and tells itself, "If we've elected a Black president, we must be postracial; but the watchman sees the mounting toll of black bodies murdered by police and hears God saying, "America, you're not postracial; you're not even postracist." ... Americans tell themselves, "If I haven't lost my job, surely the economy can't be that bad. And the watcher sees the people who are struggling to make ends meet or the essential workers who must choose between their health and no pay or their economic survival on minimal pay; and the watcher hears God saying, "¹⁴ Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns (Deuteronomy 24:14, NIV)."
3. Especially in times like these, God watchers are crucial. When a pandemic severely changes living and puts our lives at risk; when our economic future is so tenuous; when the cauldron of 4 centuries of American racism boils over again—not for the first time, but again; because we saw this before in slave rebellions and a Civil War, and a Great Migration, and an anti-lynching movement, and a Civil Rights

movement, and the urban rebellions of the 60s, and Rodney King, and Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, and now Ahmaus Arbery and Breonna Taylor and Tony McDade and George Floyd.” God’s watchers are perceptive, alert and brutally honest about what they see.

10. In the wake of the 2016 election and subsequent events it’s worth reviewing why so many people have entered a state of mourning—mourning because the primary process yielded 2 candidates who were the most unpopular candidates in the history of modern polling; mourning because that election cycle was characterized by polarization, race-baiting, scapegoating, name-calling, sleazy sexual innuendo, and outright lying to a degree that is unprecedented in living memory (and according to some scholars, unprecedented in American history); mourning because we’ve never seen a mainstream party repudiate and then embrace its own presidential candidate in this way; mourning because it was unfathomable that staunchly Republican newspapers would declare the Republican candidate unfit to serve and endorse another party’s candidate, including the Dallas Morning News, the San Diego Union-Tribune, The Arizona Republic (which never in its history has endorsed a Democrat), or The Cincinnati Enquirer (which said it had not backed a non-Republican in about 100 years); mourning because at least 160 Republican current and former governors, Senators, Representatives and Presidential candidates felt it necessary to express their complete repudiation of the racism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, religious bigotry, disrespect for the disabled, consistent lying and sexually predatory behavior of their party’s candidate. The mourning rose to a wailing pitch when the candidate with more than 2 million fewer popular votes, won the Electoral College by razor-thin margins in three states.

Scripture: I Corinthians 10:6-17

Text: vs 14-17

Occasion: Bethel-7/15/01; 7/3/05; 7/4/10; 0800, 1100 service - 6/26/16;
7/5/20

Title: I Renounce My Independence

Scripture – 1 Corinthians 10 (Message)

⁶⁻¹⁰ The same thing could happen to us. We must be on guard so that we never get caught up in wanting our own way as they did. And we must not turn our religion into a circus as they did—“First the people partied, then they threw a dance.” We must not be sexually promiscuous—they paid for that, remember, with 23,000 deaths in one day! We must never try to get Christ to serve us instead of us serving him; they tried it, and God launched an epidemic of poisonous snakes. We must be careful not to stir up discontent; discontent destroyed them.

¹¹⁻¹² These are all warning markers—DANGER!—in our history books, written down so that we don’t repeat their mistakes. ... Forget about self-confidence; it’s useless. Cultivate God-confidence....¹⁴ So, my very dear friends, when you see people reducing God to something they can use or control, get out of their company as fast as you can.¹⁵⁻¹⁸ I assume I’m addressing believers now who are mature. Draw your own conclusions: When we drink the cup of blessing, aren’t we taking into ourselves the blood, the very life, of Christ? And isn’t it the same with the loaf of bread we break and eat? Don’t we take into ourselves the body, the very life, of Christ? Because there is one loaf, our many-ness becomes one-ness—Christ doesn’t become fragmented in us. Rather, we become unified in him. We don’t reduce Christ to what we are; he raises us to what he is.

Preface

The 4th of July Weekend and, for Christians, Communion Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to think about just that and a lot more. Let’s start with the Fourth of July.

History of the Fourth

The Fourth is an interesting holiday with a history that is pretty straightforward. As one writer has noted:

“On June 11, 1776, the colonies' Second Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia formed a committee with the express purpose of drafting a document that would formally sever their ties with Great Britain [i.e. make them independent]... The final version was officially adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4... [That document,] The Declaration of Independence[,] has since become our nation's most cherished symbol of liberty... Congress established Independence Day as a holiday in 1870, and... today, communities across the nation mark this major midsummer holiday with parades, fireworks, picnics and the playing of the "Star Spangled Banner" and marches by John Philip Sousa.”³

Problems with Independence

Now I have to confess that I have always been a little uneasy with the whole 4th of July thing and the Independence thing. It begins with the words of a 34-year-old freed slave named Frederick Douglass who in Rochester, New York, on July 5, 1852 delivered his most famous speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" You must read this text. It is amazing, but let me call upon a few of his young descendants to tell the story (<https://youtu.be/NBe5qbnkqoM>) (0:00-2:21):

Eventually, Douglass says this, “I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us... Fellow citizens! The existence of

³ From “History of the Fourth: When in the Course of Human Events” in A Capitol Fourth: America’s Independence Celebration.
<http://www.pbs.org/capitolfourth/history.html>

slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretence, and your Christianity as a lie⁴
Modern History Sourcebook: Frederick Douglass: The Hypocrisy of American Slavery, July 4, 1852

Douglass saw clearly the link between slavery and independence. Independence for southern planters and northern merchants meant continued slavery for African-Americans. Financial independence for many in our current economy comes, at least in part, from profits built on the slavery of people to tobacco, overpriced drugs, unhealthy food, or wages they can't really live on. During COVID, the independence of the stay-at-home was clearly a consequence of the low-wage labor of "essential workers", 2/3 of whom never got hazardous duty pay and many of whom would have made more money not working than continuing to support the independence of others. It's not quite slavery but that hardly fits the definition of fair labor.

Explanation of My Problem with Independence

Let me be clear. I don't have a problem with the kind of independence that the dictionary defines as "showing a desire for freedom";... "not bound by or committed to a political party";... "taking responsibility for myself and for others." There's nothing wrong with desiring freedom and politically I've been a registered independent voter for year. God knows we need more people to step up to the plate and take responsibility for themselves, for their families, for their communities, for this church, and for God's world. I have no problem with independence in those contexts. My problem is with independence that means "not subject to (any) control by others" or "not requiring or relying on others." I've got a problem with the independence people are talking about when they try to pass themselves off as self-made men or women—as if they gave birth to themselves,

⁴ From "What To The Slave Is 4th of July? by Frederick Douglass (1817-1885)" at Chicken Bones: A Journal for Literary and Artistic African-American Themes. <http://www.nathanielturner.com/fourthofjulyspeech.htm>.

breast- or bottle-fed themselves, wiped their dirty bottoms by themselves, taught themselves to speak, thought up reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic themselves, got confident all by themselves, gave themselves that first job, mentored themselves, promoted themselves, avoided every pitfall trap and stumbling block themselves, prayed all by themselves, wept all by themselves, sacrificed all by themselves, and succeeded all by themselves. That kind of independence thinking can be deadly.

That kind of thinking makes babies but doesn’t raise them or support their mothers;...converts communities into free-fire zones where 14 year-olds who don’t have a nickel in the quarter get cut down;...makes people insist on their right to not wear a mask, no matter how risky that might be for elders and those with chronic conditions in our community. It’s the spirit that deludes people into thinking that they are the sole superpower and they can start wars anywhere and anytime they desire—independent of world opinion, independent of Geneva conventions on torture, independent of the need to use war as a last resort. It’s the spirit that makes human beings think the planet can be used and abused—polluted, its atmosphere filled with carbon dioxide and methane, its waters polluted with oil or chemicals—as if their health, their livelihood, their future is independent of their stewardship over God’s creation.

When Frederick Douglass talked about “the venomous creature...that seriously disturbs and endangers your *Union*...feters your progress;...is the enemy of improvement,... fosters pride;...breeds insolence;... promotes vice;...shelters crime;[and]...is a curse to the earth that supports it,” he was not just talking about American slavery and all the injustice that followed it. I believe the same words could be applied to the spirit of independence that rules in too many hearts and heads and churches today. And that’s why on this Communion Sunday on this Independence Weekend, I renounce my independence and encourage you to renounce yours. Indeed if we are human beings, and especially if we are for-real

Christians, we are highly dependent—first on the head, who is Christ, and then we are interdependent on others. We are interdependent, not independent. I understand people’s deep concerns even as I am learning to better understand those who are currently jubilant or, having held their noses, voted for a candidate with whom they were less-satisfied and were just happy that the whole sordid affair is over.

A dynamic in the current Black Lives Matter Movement

4. I’m sensitive to this dynamic, because in the summer of 2015 I found myself, in a sermon, being excited about the issues the Black Lives Matter movement was raising, but concerned because they seemed to be going the way of the Occupy movement—without clear objectives or strategy. I kept asking activists that I knew and worked with, “When are you going to get to the power issues?” When are you going to focus on the procedural justice issues? When are you going to organize the movement and build the power that will allow you to demand civilian review boards, better screening and training for police officers, more community policing programs, bodycams, ending the militarization of police forces, reform of the grand jury system, independent authorities for the investigation of police shootings and confrontation of our privilege, our fears and even our hatreds across the boundaries of race and class.

5. I’m still concerned about those issues and still concerned about how it will all work out, but I failed to understand Black Lives Matter on its own terms. If I had simply gone to the website I would have read this: “When we say Black Lives Matter, we are broadening the conversation around state violence to include all of the ways in which Black people are intentionally left powerless at the hands of the state. We are talking

about the ways in which Black lives are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity.”⁵

6. I think it’s fair to say that I care and Black Lives Matter activists care about racial justice. And what I now understand is that we both see the importance of addressing the issues of dignity and power. Indeed, I am all the more convinced that real racial justice is impossible without serious attention to the restoration of dignity and the equitable sharing of power. Indeed, Dr. Hicks and I agree that:
- c. The recognition of another’s dignity is not a substitute for the sharing of power
 - d. The sharing of power without a recognition of the other’s dignity is a recipe for future conflict.

When globalization and outsourcing seem to be the order of the day; when the question is no longer whether there will be layoffs, but simply when the layoffs will take place and whose head will be on the chopping block, people are afraid. When they hear over and over the drumbeat of America’s decline as an economic power, when they are told that the next generation will not enjoy the same standard of living that their parents did, they become afraid. When it hits them that drugs are not simply a problem in the ghettos, but that it is ravaging their suburban neighborhood, their rural town, they are afraid. And in an atmosphere of fear, it is easy to look for someone, anyone—the immigrant, the minority, the poor, the powerless—to define as the enemy, to make the scapegoat. Politicians will do it to get elected, demagogues will do it to gain members, and the media will broadcast it to gain ratings.

5. I’m reminded of the story of the third grade teacher who was reviewing a unit on American History with her class. After a discussion about how France had given us the Statue of Liberty, the teacher asked how many

⁵ “About the Black Lives Matter Network”. Found at <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>. 18-Nov-15.

of her pupils had seen the statue. Several children raised their hands. Anticipating a chance to be dramatic and to recite "Give me your tired, your poor . . ." the teacher asked if anyone knew what was written on the base of the statue. There was silence. Then one youngster raised her hand excitedly and said, "It says, 'Made in France'"

6. Every child born in this Commonwealth and in this country will carry as a part of their foundation—the stamp on their base—"Made in MA and made in the USA." What will that stamp mean? I hope that it will mean that they were raised in a place where communities valued every child and where homes and hearts and health centers and houses of worship were open to provide support for families that struggle to function, an alternative to families that do not function, a quality education, afterschool and weekend activities, decent food, shelter, and health care, and the loving affirmation every child needs.
7. I hope that it will mean that they were raised in a nation where public health and political leaders remembered the words of Hubert Humphrey who once said that the measure of a city, a state, or a nation is not how it takes care of people who stand in the sunshine of life, but what it does for those who are in the dawn of life—the unborn and the young—those who are in the twilight of life—the elderly— and those who stand in the shadows of life—the homeless, the hungry, and the handicapped. I hope that it will mean that they were raised in a place where the governmental authorities understood that political leadership is not measured by one's ability to read the polls and pander to the fears of the electorate. Leadership is measured by the ability to help people look beyond their fears, develop a new and inclusive vision, and offer an agenda that leads all of us to a higher place.

I hope that it will mean that they were raised in a nation where pronouncements about "world-class" cities and economies were more than

rhetoric; where the business community made as great an investment in the local community as it did in emerging economies around the world; where the private sector found ways to mobilize and deploy the human skills, in-kind resources, and financial help so desperately needed in our schools and community centers; where businesses found ways to make policies that were supportive of children and families.

The Civil Rights vs. Black Power Movements dynamic

1. I was reminded of this several years ago as I listened to Dr. Gayraud Wilmore, author of the influential text *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, reflect back over his 93 years and his seminal role in the Civil Rights movement and the Black Liberation Theology movement. I was reminded of the battle within the Black community between those who thought Martin Luther, King, apostle of nonviolence, was right and those who thought Stokely Carmichael, apostle of Black Power, was right and some of this comes down to issues of power and dignity.
2. The truth is that both parties were seeking power and dignity. Sometimes I think we may be guilty of overplaying the differences between King and Carmichael, just to heighten the dramatic tension. After all, in the year before his death, Dr. King wrote these words:
“Power, properly understood, is the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political or economic changes. In this sense power is not only desirable but necessary in order to implement the demands of love and justice. One of the greatest problems of history is that the concepts of love and power are usually contrasted as polar opposites. ...What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. ...There is nothing essentially wrong with

power. The problem is that in America power is unequally distributed.”⁶:

King and Carmichael may have been less divided than many thought, but the organizational camps they represented saw themselves pursuing racial justice from radically different approaches. To the exponents of Black Power, the Civil Rights leadership seemed too focused on dealing with the daily indignities of life—segregated lunch counters, water fountains, schools, buses,, beaches, etc. and too committed to not violating their own dignity by adopting a non-violent approach in the face of violent oppression. To the exponents of the nonviolence approach, the pursuit of power, by Black Power proponents, in a way that resembled the methods of the oppressor was both tactically suicidal and strategically disastrous. It would violate the dignity of those pressing for justice, make them little more than mirror images of those they opposed, invite massive retaliation, alienate potential allies in America and around the world, and leave Black people ultimately with diminished power and dignity.

You can judge for yourself who was right and wrong. My goal is simply to point out another instance of this dynamic between power and dignity and my conviction that real racial justice is impossible without serious attention to the restoration of dignity and the equitable sharing of power.

2. Pastoral scene of the gallant south

Them big bulging eyes and the twisted mouth

Scent of magnolia, clean and freshi

Then the sudden smell of burning flesh

3. No one puts the post-racial illusion on the chopping block more trenchantly or concisely than Ta-Nehisi Coates in July/Aug 2016 issue

⁶ Martin Luther King. *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*, p. 37

of Atlantic in a short piece entitled, “There Is No Post-Racial America”⁷
Allow me to quote it briefly:

THE TERM *POST-RACIAL* is almost never used in earnest. Instead it’s usually employed by talk-show hosts and news anchors looking to measure progress in the Obama era. Earnest or not, the questions we ask matter. As many of our sharper activists and writers have pointed out, America’s struggle is to become not post-racial, but post-racist.... The answer is in our past, in our résumé, in our work experience. From the days of slave patrols, through the era of lynching and work farms, into this time of mass incarceration, criminal justice has been the primary tool for managing the divide between black and white. We’ve done this for so long that we’re now almost on autopilot. Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray keep happening because they have to keep happening. Our long history of viewing African Americans through the lens of criminal justice is a kind of programming that demands Freddie Gray keep happening. The programming does not require a critical mass of evil racists in order to be carried out. And we will need a lot more than a good president—than a great president—to terminate it.

4.

⁷ Found at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/07/post-racial-society-distant-dream/395255/>. 8-Dec-16.