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Doctor of Ministry Thesis

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Post Graduate Center for Mental Health

Mixing Race and Culture in Church

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February 2006

Thesis

Chapter I The Struggle of Mixing Race and Culture in Church
or
The Church of Clapping and No Clapping
by Carl Rosenblum

A- The congregation I served as an interim pastor was originally a Dutch Reformed Church, a denomination that has been in the New York area from the 1630's, before the British captured New Amsterdam and renamed it New York. The local congregation, now called the Queens Village Reformed Church in Queens Village, New York, was founded in 1858 in what was to become a very desirable middle class neighborhood, as the area became less agricultural and more suburban and urban.

A changing population is nothing new to Queens Village. But from the mid 1970's through the 1990's the population changes included non-white people, especially African Americans and West Indians. Most of the new non-white families were working and middle class. The pastor previous to me, who served from 1989-1998, created an open door policy to welcome all people, and so non-whites joined the congregation. After nine years of integration under the previous pastor's leadership, the congregation is now about 60 percent non-white and 40 percent white. The non-whites are African Americans, Haitians, West Indians (especially Jamaicans) plus one Hispanic family. The white congregation tends to be from Northern European extraction.

When I arrived in October 1998, as a half time interim pastor, it seemed as if integration had taken place smoothly. However, my cursory evaluation soon showed itself to be wrong. From time to time I would hear a white member say, "Things aren't what they used to be; in the old days we really knew how to take care of the church. You know what I mean,

Pastor? When the church was growing, we had people who knew how to do things to help the church." Finally, an elder said, "The non-whites better learn how to keep the neighborhood clean." She also said "Can you believe it, some people think I'm a racist?" Another revered and faithful long-term white member said, "I guess I am just an American. I don't like what these people are doing to our town. I know I'm probably wrong; I'm supposed to love everyone. And of course, God made everyone. But I can't help it. I just don't like all these immigrants coming to our town." These angry, hostile feelings are both below and above the surface, and I soon began to feel very uncomfortable.

Then some of the non-whites began to express their concerns about the antagonism they felt from the whites who were long-standing members and who held most of the power in the church. I realized that the ruling body, Consistory, which has four elders and four deacons on the Board, had an equal number of whites and non-whites, but the whites controlled the office of elder, the non-whites the office of deacon. The office of elder has more weight and authority. The committees, which these eight officers oversee and chair, have members from the congregation serving with them, but of the seven committees, only two had non-white members. These two were the Family Life and the Outreach Committees, which supported the after school program that was used by the non-white community families. There are about 10 to 12 white members serving on five committees controlling the personnel, finance, budget, property and the worship life of the congregation.

The white members of Queens Reformed Church displayed many behaviors outlined by Gordon W. Allport, in his classic book, The Nature of Prejudice (1954, p. 141-151), the five stages of prejudice. 1) **Antilocation**: Expressing antipathetic feelings about a group with like-minded friends. The white members did this with me assuming that since I was white I would

be like-minded; 2) **Avoidance:** Whites avoided social situations with non-whites such as coffee hour, especially when hosted by non-whites, and picnics sponsored by the Family Life Committee, a committee with non-white members. The whites "did not directly inflict harm but rather took the burden of accommodation and withdrew" (p. 153). **Discrimination:** This is an overt active determination to exclude. The non-whites were excluded from serving on certain church committees that held power over property, finance, budget, personnel and worship services. The small group of long-standing white members only invited other whites to serve on these committees with them, so that about 10 to 12 people held most of the power in the church. Committees were put together by invitation of the chair as well as by volunteering. (Only the governing board, the Consistory, was elected by the congregation at a public meeting. This elected board was 50/50 white and non-white, a ratio that more closely reflected a congregation that was about 60/40 non-white/white.) This form of discrimination, excluding a group, had created segregation in our American society, cutting people out of fair housing, education, employment and recreation opportunities. This was going on in the congregation.

The last two stages of prejudice, according to Alport, are acting out: 4) **physical attack** and 5) **extermination**. This was not the situation in the Queens Reformed Church, but in the 19th century Christian churches had supported such behavior toward non-whites. In the earlier centuries, the Dutch Reformed Church supported slave traders in the New York area. There is no necessity that prejudice progresses from stages 1 to 5, but according to Alport the later stages, 4 and 5, do not exist without the presence of the earlier stages. The three earlier stages were present in the Queens Village Reformed Church.

Most of the prejudicial attitudes and actions were carried out in a covert way, but I could not help but wonder what might have happened in earlier times, such as the first half of

the 20th century, when segregation was the accepted norm. How overt would this behavior have become? How overt was the behavior during the years of segregation? Queens Village had a reputation for being racist in the 1950's and 1960's.

Prejudicial attitudes played out at the committee level impacted outreach programs and questions of church leadership. In the spring of 1999, the Finance Committee voted to have the outreach/after school program budget moved to their domain for monitoring, because of so-called financial mismanagement. This program served the community of mainly non-white children, but the Finance Committee declared its intent to close the program. This vote came as a motion to the Consistory for final approval, but it was defeated. I supported the move to defeat the request to have the money transferred. Consistory did not feel there was mismanagement. From that time on I was viewed as a problem to the long time members, and they worked hard to have me removed by September 30th, the official end of my contract, by a recommendation and motions of the Personnel Committee to the Consistory. However, this motion was also defeated at the Consistory level, where two long-standing white members voted with the newer non-white members. My contract was extended and I stayed until June 30, 2000. I was supported by all but one of the Consistory members and this support was racially mixed, including long-standing and newer members.

Another area where the struggle played out was within the worship service. The worship service style was right out of the 1970's. The music seemed heavy and plodding. The liturgy was lifeless. Few people responded to it and most did not identify with it. When some people complained about the music, I asked the music director why we did not sing some Gospel music and hymns with more of a beat? He responded that they had an informal hymnbook but had put it away after the last pastor left. I asked whose decision it had been to

do that. He named five older white women, saying they didn't like the informal music. Meanwhile, those who did like it never knew what happened to the songbooks.

The newer congregants began commenting about the deadness of the service, while the long-standing white members were guarding the service to preserve the format, music style and liturgy, that they have always enjoyed and that had nurtured them in their faith in their younger years. As one older member said, "Pastor, I joined the Worship Committee to make sure there would be no clapping in church." This statement says all that the older members felt. On one occasion, I invited a friend from Malawi, East Africa, who danced and sang in our church service in her African church style. Every non-white person thought it was a wonderful experience and some said it was the best service they ever attended. But not one white person said anything positive and not one greeted our guest. This incident clearly highlighted the division in the church. The guest was non-white; she danced, sang and clapped as part of worship, none of which could be appreciated by the long-standing white members. The guest was loved by the newer non-white members because they felt represented in worship. They identified with her.

The overt debate over the style of service was never expressed in racial terms, and for many the racism was not personal. How the white people felt was not racist in their minds, even though it was belittling and patronizing of non-whites. Because they did not feel personal hatred towards the non-whites, they did not believe themselves to be prejudiced – they missed the nuances of their own discriminating behavior. The institution of the church was acting racist, but the long-standing members did not see it because it was all they had known.

According to Janet E. Helms, who wrote A Race is a Nice Thing to Have (1992), "White culture is often invisible to its partakers" (p. 14). She says there are three different

forms of racism: 1) **individual**, 2) **cultural** and 3) **institutional** and "all can be expressed overtly or covertly and can be expressed intentionally or unintentionally" (p. 19).

"The major cost to white people is that the perpetuation of racism makes it virtually impossible to function and compete in a multiracial society except through domination, suppression and massive denial of reality" (p. 20). The older white people were in denial about their behavior and could not see that they only invited white people to join committees that governed the church. They were using domination and suppression to maintain control. From their point of view, they were saving the church from disintegration. For them, to integrate was to disintegrate and to lose the superiority of white culture for a lesser way. They believed, or as Helms wrote, "Not that white is beautiful but that white is superior. This is how white people think" (p. 8). "White privilege is a benefit of being white and is the foundation of racism" (p. 12). The members would agree racism is wrong and Christians should behave better. Nonetheless, this was the situation.

The older, aging white members were losing their church, the church of their youth, and feeling threatened by the loss of power and control that comes with aging. This would have happened even if race issues weren't part of the situation. Music styles, social codes and dress style change from generation to generation and can threaten a congregation's traditions. In the book Inside Out and Outside In (1996), Joan Bergoff, commenting on Erik Erickson, writes under *Old Age: Integrity vs. Despair* "Old age requires acceptance that death is an inevitable part of life...western culture responds to old age with fear and denial...in this last stage of life, integrity is the opposite of self-centered love" (p. 119). The seniors at Queens Reformed, to some degree, were in denial about their time of life and instead acted in a self-centered way, trying to preserve what pleased them, while telling themselves it was for the good of the next

generation. Erickson describes adulthood as a time of "generativity vs. stagnation." The behavior of the Queens Reformed people was not the work of generative adults, who would have tried to create a new expression inclusive of all; instead it was a period of stagnation. Their solution was not to let things change. In Jewish Spiritual Guidance, (1997) Carol Ochs and Kerry Olitzky write "Old age has its own temptations. With less physical strength and the death of many friends, the great task is to fight off despair" (p. 182). The Queens Reformed white members decided to fight off their despair, but they picked the old battle of resisting integration. This revitalized them but it kept them living in the past, as well as in a self-centered state.

B- In pastoring this church through this divisive period, my goal is to minister to all members for this diverse congregation and to help them find value in each other, instead of seeing the other as one who takes away or one who withholds. Since everyone considered worship central to their lives and since everyone must worship out of their true self, how can this congregation develop a multicultural intergenerational service that provides for everyone's needs? How can individuals take pleasure in seeing the needs of others met as well as their own? This means valuing the tradition as well as welcoming newness. The intent of the seminar that I offer will hopefully give all the people insight by bringing the various groups into community around the liturgy in worship. The goal was to develop a liturgy that services the full community and the creation of such a service must be a work of art, as opposed to a hodgepodge.

C- If this can be effected, it will enrich all members, bringing healing and renewal. There will then be energy left to do mission and service, the energy which previously had been used to control others.

The wider value of the project will be to make the congregation more available to the community in which it is located. New members might join, which this church desperately needs if it is going to survive into the next generation, and the community needs a church that is responsive to its needs.

Chapter II

A- Although one of the issues in the congregation is racism, both personal and institutional, I feel the best way to get at the problem is through building relationships around our common ground, our reason for gathering, namely worship. A straightforward approach would cause defensive reactions with the long-term white members and break down communication. I plan to talk about the subject of racism in other forums, like sermons and study groups, weaving it into the texture of church life so that congregants become aware that the issue needs to be addressed. Unless the issue finds some resolution, the congregation will remain irrelevant to the community.

The religious principles I'm examining are love of God and neighbor, inclusiveness, justice and peace in order to have a true community and to offer acceptable worship to God. This is the background to the project, which is to develop a workshop on worship. It is in worship that the long-standing members have resisted changes rejecting cultural differences, which in turn has made the church unresponsive to the needs of the neighborhood, a multicultural community. Relevant literature includes Christ and Culture by R. Niebuhr, Theology, History and Culture by H. R. Niebuhr, the sermons of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Black Theology and Liberation, and God of the Oppressed by James Cone, and Ending Racism

in the Church by Davies and Hennessee. This is the background reading in preparation for the study of worship.

Relevant literature for the worship workshop includes The Bible especially the passages dealing with worship and describing worship, such as Revelation chapters 4 and 5, Isaiah 6, Psalms, The Reformed Church in America's Directory for Worship, A Short History of Western Liturgy by Klauser, For All God's Worth by Wright, Looking at the Liturgy by Aidan Nichols, Worship As Body Language by Uzukwu, Alternative Futures for Worship edited by Michael Cowan, Jewish Spiritual Guidance by Carol Ochs and Kerry Olitzky, Conversations With God by James Washington, Editor, The Book of Common Worship of the Presbyterian Church USA, Springtime of the Liturgy by Lucien Deiss, Holy Things - A Liturgical Theology by Gordon Lathrop, Priest as Prophet by Judith Rock, Urban Bush Woman by Zellar and Bill T. Jones' autobiography Last Night on Earth.

B- The clinical principles I'm examining are the issues of xenophobia, racism, and the fear of change and loss of identity, especially by an aging segment of the population. The long-standing members fear they are losing the familiar church of their youth and are now grasping to hold on to it and the memories of the past. The problem can be understood as one of family dynamics, in which the siblings (church members) are feeling threatened and vying for power. I need to be seen as a parent who can be benevolent and unprejudiced, helping to assuage people's fears of being displaced. Although the seminar group is not being scheduled for therapeutic reasons, hopefully the group process will address the more deep-seated psychological issues in order to reach the goals of the project of an integrated worship service. Change is inevitable. Hopefully the long-term members can come to realize that change can be good and that the racial differences just add to the mix of what new things are about to happen.

Literature includes: The New Testament, especially where it touches on racism, classism, sexism; Race, Racism and Psychology by Richard Graham; Inside Out and Outside In by Berzoff, Melano, Flanagan and Hertz; An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis by Charles Brenner, M.D.; The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy by Irvin D. Yalom; and The Nature of Prejudice by Gordon Allport.

Chapter III

A- The project will consist of four educational classes on the topic of worship, plus four workshops to help the people process what they are learning by talking out the issues of change in order to deal with their resistance and fears. The last section of each seminar will be on how to prepare a worship service and how to participate in worship leadership. Each class and workshop will be a unit of 90 minutes. Forty minutes will be for the educational part followed by 30 minutes for group discussion. In addition, 20 minutes will focus on beginning to put together a worship service that is appropriate for our congregation and learning how to be a worship leader. An extra class will be offered for all who would like to create a worship service and to be a worship leader for actual use within the month.

B- The goal of these class experiences will be to form a lay worship team that will work with the pastor and the worship committee to develop at least one worship experience for the benefit of the congregation, based on the ideas that we studied together.

The success of the project will be indicated by ongoing, increased participation in worship preparation by the laity, based on the concepts presented in these classes. This should make the congregation and the worship services more appealing to the general community that has become multiracial over the past 15 years.

Another measure of the success of the project will be the new attitudes expressed by the congregation as it experiences different cultural forms of worship as expressed by their fellow congregants. Worship service styles have been a battleground that has prevented the multicultural aspects of the congregation from growing. Through a survey form as well as general feedback, a barometer of people's attitudes could be registered to see if changes were really taking place.

Lastly, an increase in attendance from the community would be a sign that we have opened ourselves up to other people and have therefore given the church an opportunity for the future.

Chapter IV – A. Results

The goal was to form a worship team to work with the pastor, increasing participation by the congregation and thereby reflecting the multicultural nature of the church. The project was successful in creating a worship service based on the studies in which we engaged. The studies resulted in a multicultural expression in a worship service with a variety of people participating.

For some, working and talking together broke down the racial barriers. After I made the presentation in the seminars, participant responses were at first stilted. (See Seminar Verbatims.) The speaking style actually exemplified the atmosphere of the congregation in which no one said too much publicly for fear of offending or being out on a limb alone. In the first seminar verbatim, the white members spoke out, dominating the conversation. Seven out of eight voices who first spoke were from white members. Five non-whites spoke but were careful not to offend. They knew their ideas were not welcomed. Not until the fourth seminar did the subject of racism get "laid on the table", as said by George (p. 14, the seminar section).

As the seminar progressed, people began to feel more comfortable expressing their ideas. In the fourth seminar both Roland and George took the lead. They had both suffered from white domination in the West Indies, both knew of the church's prior complicity in slavery, and both experienced segregation in the United States. If they were going to work for change in the church, it had to be now, in the last seminar. They put the issue in an historical context so it wasn't confrontational, but it soon moved to the personal without being accusatory. The issues were clearly stated. Kim said she had felt racism from some people but it was not up front. Marie mentioned how it does affect worship because her ideas as a black person were not as valued as those of a white person. A few then mentioned that the church needed a more balanced service (culturally balanced - Tina p. 13, Verbatims #4), which was the goal of the seminar as stated in Chapter 1B.

Following the fourth seminar, I took the opportunity to meet with the five long-standing white members who were the most resistant to sharing the church equally with non-white members. Four of these were women and one a man. They were hurt by such a suggestion, believing their intentions were misunderstood. Three of the five felt remorseful about the pain they might have caused. They began to mix more across racial lines. The unified white resistance was broken. Each white person made her or his own decision about how much to join the whole community.

As for my role as pastor, I was able to care for all the members. According to Yalom (1950) "The basic posture of a therapist must be one of concern, acceptance, genuineness, empathy. Nothing, no technical consideration, takes precedence over this attitude" (p. 106). But for me personally, the racist issue was a moral one. In my heart I was not neutral on the issue. I feel sure the white members who did not change were upset with me. I had engineered

a scenario that undermined their hold on the church. Yet, in my attitude I could allow for diversity of views with the goal of keeping as many people as possible in the church. A confrontational approach would have caused a fight and maybe even a split in the church. No one left the church when I finished my work, but some were disappointed. The seminars expanded beyond the four scheduled meetings to include two workshops, one on drumming and one on liturgical dance. There were also two rehearsals beyond the seminars to prepare the worship service.

The idea to add drumming to the service came from the visit of Annie Natchasali who sang and danced in the Malawi African style. Curt Collier, a classmate and the leader of the Riverdale Ethicultural Society, volunteered to teach a drumming class. Eighteen people came – eight adults and 10 children. Two of the 18 were white. He taught us three different beats. The class was able to apply the learning using drums to accompany the hymn singing in the special services.

Next, Dr. Joanne Tucker, a professor at Hebrew Union College and founder of Avodah, a liturgical dance company, invited my church to an Avodah rehearsal. Seven adults and four youngsters came. We first observed the dancers. They then shared their experience of dancing to the words of the text. Lastly, Dr. Tucker invited us to experience the text using body movement to express our feelings as we listened to the text. All the church participants were non-white. What they experienced is partially recorded (Seminar Verbatim #3 number page 10). It clearly shows how some gained insight through body movement, Jereen in particular.

It became known to the congregation that there was to be a special service prepared by the adult laity. The children and teens of the church each wanted to lead a service too. While the project was going on, we had two participatory services. The children, with their parents'

guidance, read the adult liturgy, sang special songs and prepared and gave a children's sermon. (See Appendix A #2b Bulletin for the Children Led Service.) All 15 children participating were non-white. The older white community showed minimal response to the children, but all the parents were very proud. Next, 10 teenagers prepared a service. They chose more lively music and sang as a choir a very upbeat piece. Two young men volunteered to give the sermon. (See Appendix A #2c Teenage Led Service.) Eight of the 10 were non-white. Naturally the parents praised the youth, while the white members gave encouragement to the preachers who were not white. These two services actually helped pave the way for the Adult Laity Service to be received.

The culminating event was the Adult and Laity Palm Sunday service, created and presented by the worship team (Appendix A #1) It was a great success with 15 people participating. Eight people read a passage of scripture from the Gospel of St. John 9. (Appendix A #1a) Each person took the lines of a character in the text and read them in a dramatic way. This was the high point of the service. Both youth and adults participated in drumming. A senior white man, who supported the whole process, volunteered to preach and gave a passionate sermon on the theme of light, which was the topic from John 9. All in attendance were appreciative, but the white members were more reserved in their response. The participants were white and non-white in a 1 to 4 ratio. Just the act of preparing and rehearsing together helped racial tensions fade.

Upon completion of the project, questionnaires were handed out to assess the congregation's response to all the special services. Seventeen questionnaires were returned out of a realistic possibility of 35 active adult members. Most people signed their names so it was easy to tell if they were white or non-white, long-term or newer members. The range of

response was from *Dislike a Lot* #1 to *Very Positive* #5. Number 3 was a neutral response. The breakdown showed 13 had a positive or very positive response to the special services while four had a neutral response. Of these, three were long-term white members. One person wrote (which I think typifies these sentiments) "I really don't think anything was extra negative and there were many good positive moments." He rated everything #3, neutral. The evaluation was reflective of the mood being expressed by the long-standing white members. (See Appendix # IV - Survey Summary.)

IV B. First Unanticipated Result

It was now May 2004. Summer session was coming and with it a natural slow down in church life. But it was also rumored that the pastoral search committee had found a candidate. My interim pastoral relationship was coming to an end. This also meant that I needed to retreat from developing new programs such as an ongoing laity worship team because the new pastor had the right to start fresh. Besides, energy needed to be directed to the arrival and welcome of the new pastor. My contract was extended two months until June 30th. The new person was soon on site. There was no opportunity for me to see if new people would join the congregation once there was more participation and some healing of relationships among the membership.

I believe the project helped prepare the congregation for the next permanent pastor who was an African American woman. Her race was a total non-issue. Some of the African American members told me they were stunned; they never believed it could have happened, that an African-American could be called as pastor. However, all of the members took to her and unanimously voted for her. She was a charming, well-educated woman, with previous work experience on Wall Street who while in seminary school had interned at a church. She

was also well-connected in the denomination, serving on national committees. Race and color were a non-issue because the candidate was so qualified. Her installation service, which I attended, was held within two months. The breadth and diversity of her own background and tastes allowed her to create a service that accommodated everyone, particularly in regards to music. A jazz combo played the prelude music as well as accompanying a gospel music soloist. Other musicians offered Bach and Mozart. Following the service, three of the five white members, who had resisted the integration, came up to me to say how wonderful the service was. It seemed everyone was happy.

IV B. Second Unanticipated Result

I did not realize how enthusiastically, especially with the music, that the congregation wanted to participate in worship. The coming forward of the children and teens was a surprise but expressed a need to overthrow the oppression they were feeling. The same was true for the adults who attended four seminars and two worship preparation rehearsal sessions, plus two additional classes, one on drumming and one on liturgical dance. There was a deep desire for self-expression. The people only needed a channel and permission to let it out.

IV B. Third Unanticipated Result

I was also taken back about how considerate and sensitive the non-white community was toward the older white members, realizing that they too were feeling at a loss. The older people were losing what they had, while the newer non-whites felt the loss of what might be but what hadn't come to fruition. This sensitivity helped the non-whites proceed step by step in this process. They too wanted everyone to stay in the church. As Tina said (Verbatim #4, p.13) "No one should leave."

Chapter V: Implication of results

Using body movement in worship by clapping, drumming, singing, as well as speaking in the service was how the non-white congregation wanted to participate in worship. This was clearly resisted by the members who joined the worship committee to make sure there would be no clapping in church (see top of p. 5). This resistance was also showed to the guest from Malawi by the older, long-standing white members. This revealed the cultural differences in the congregation, especially as it relates to body movement in worship.

In Western culture, as far back as Plato, this tension between body and soul can be found, as shown in *Timeus* 69c (1961 *The Collected Dialogues*): "They (humans) received from him the immortal principle of the soul and around this they proceeded to fashion a mortal body and made it to be the vehicle of the soul and then constructed within the body a soul of another nature which was mortal, subject to terrible and irresistible affection..." The immortal soul is housed in the body but the body and the mortal soul have an existence apart from the immortal. It was this concept that church fathers in the early centuries of Christianity, including St. Augustine, attached to St. Paul's ideas of how the flesh was warring against the spirit. This dichotomy of body and soul or flesh and spirit is most striking in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 7:14-25:

"We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I

that do it, but sin which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." (Bible, NRSV, 1990).

The split between body (flesh) and mind (soul) created suspicion and fear of the body aspects of being human. The body is something to be controlled and brought into subjection to the mind (soul).

People from non-European cultures do not split spirit and flesh or mind and soul from body, but rather see these as different aspects of themselves. The Hebrew scripture expresses this unity of being. The clay body and the "nephesh" (soul) of the ADAM (Genesis 2:7) together form the human. The clay is not just housing for the soul but soul and body together make the person.

The church members from the West Indies and the African Americans, whose cultures were less influenced by Western thought and in particular Plato and Augustine, did not feel the same compulsion to control the "flesh" or body. Instead they were taught to integrate the body and soul in worship.

No dancing, no drinking, no overt sexual behavior were standard rules in Western churches. The Reformed Church of America grew out of the reformation in Geneva via Holland. The Dutch church followed the teachings of John Calvin from Geneva. Calvin was renewing the church by reviving the theology of Augustine and St. Paul. This meant the

tension between body and soul would continue. Up until the 1980s, no dancing was a policy in the Queens Village Reformed Church. In particular, it seems women, drums and dancing are all part of concerns about arousing the carnal (sexual/bodily) nature of our humanity.

In early Christianity, women lost influence in the church by the end of the first century A.D. They were told by Paul not to speak in church, but to learn at home from their husbands (1 Corinthians 14:34). From the Didascalia, written by church fathers in 375 A.D., "women were ordered not to speak in church, not even softly, nor could they sing aloud. They should be silent and pray to God."

The words of St. Paul telling women to keep silent (1Corinthians 14:34) might not have been intended as universal wisdom but it was applied that way. Women were viewed with suspicion partly because of the erotic energy females aroused in males. Men felt the energy needed to be controlled; therefore women needed to be controlled. Women were to be covered, quiet and still. This fear of the erotic, wedded with Plato's view of body and soul as distinct entities, found an expression in a developing ascetic Christianity, that called for celibacy and other disciplines. Women themselves became the enforcers of the rules as much as men.

In the 5th century, St. Augustine took up the Platonic views of soul and body, so a Neoplatonism was incorporated in the church's theology which was already seemingly compatible in St. Paul's writings. Nancey Murphy, Ph.D. comments on Augustine and Neoplatonism in her paper "Whatever Happened to the Soul, a Theological Perspective on Neuroscience and the Soul" (2003) available over the internet. She writes, "By cultivating higher faculties of the soul and repressing the lower faculties of the body, one develops the capacity for knowledge of a relationship to God."

Yet from earliest times, religious rituals involved drums along with choreographed movements. Earliest archaeological evidence depicts women as drummers. Women's bodies were considered holy due to their childbearing ability, and the sounds of the drums were like the first sounds the fetus heard, the beat of the mother's heart in utero. In Jewish scriptures, body movement and music were part of temple worship. Even King David danced before the Lord (II Samuel 6:16). Some Psalms are hymns set to music for processions.

In a "Dance Magazine" article (1966), Linda Kent and Joanne Tucker noted that "dance was the first religious practice and ritual movement. It was created to help us cope with the forces of nature, for instance rain dances or harvest celebration dances." Dance or body movement has always been a part of religious life as seen in processions and often choreography. Members of the Shaker community danced in worship. Today, professional dance companies create pieces with religious themes like Alvin Alley's "Revelation." Some churches create liturgies with choreographed dance, such as Crystal Cathedral's "Glory of Christmas Pageant" and St. John the Divine's "Earth Mass." (The Crystal Cathedral is a member of the Reformed Church of America.) There are also liturgical dance troops like Avodah whose purpose is to aid worship. Bill T. Jones wrote in Last Night on Earth (1995) "Dance was about the body and what it wanted to taste, what it wanted to say. Who knew the body could talk" (p. 67). This is what Jereen discovered (Verbatim #3).

The desire of the non-white members to allow for more physical participation and emotional expression in the service was rejected by the white members of Queens Reformed Church because it was viewed as "black" and therefore "less": less dignified, less spiritual and potentially sinful. From the above example we see that the resistance in the Queens Reformed Church is not a universally agreed upon view. In this Christian congregation, the cultural

traditions of European and non-European Christian communities were in tension, diverging on the point the body plays in worship. Because "black" was viewed as less, therefore their participation with physical expression was rejected.

The ability of some in this community to change and rise above their unexamined prejudices is a compliment to the effectiveness of their faith. Jesus and the New Testament writers taught clearly that there is no place for racism in the church. In Galatians 2:20, St. Paul wrote, "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male or female, but we are all one." (Bible, NRSV 1990). Reinhold Niebuhr (1951), in Christ Beyond Culture, shows how the effectiveness of the Gospel of Jesus is that Jesus Christ can relate to any and all people in any culture, any place and any time in history. "Culture is under God's sovereign rule and that the Christian must carry on cultural work in obedience to the Lord" (p. 191). "As culture is created, God is present and able to communicate through it" (p. 192). "A view of history holds that to God all things are possible in a history that is fundamentally not a course of merely human events but always a dramatic interaction between God and man. History is the story of God's mighty deeds and man's responses to them" (p. 195).

James Cone said in A Black Theology of Liberation (1986), "Theology is the study of God in light of the world's existential situation, oppression, relating to forces of liberation which is the essence of the Gospel." "Jesus came to set the captive free not just in spiritual issues, but all issues" (p. 1). In Moral Man and Immoral Society (1996), H. Richard Niebuhr wrote "For the church, both Catholic and Protestant, the course of love was interpreted religiously rather than socially. It guaranteed equality before God and therefore in the religious community but this did not imply that the church would strive to realize the ideal of social justice in society" (p. 77). "The Christian community (the church)," Dr. Cone writes (God the

Oppressed 1975), "is of the oppressed which joins Jesus Christ in his fight for liberation of humankind" (p. 3). He concludes that white theology is not Christian at all because it does not liberate, neither the non-white from racism nor the whites from their racist hatreds.

In the United States the white church, until recently, has sided with the status quo, ignoring the plight of minority people. The Queens Village Reformed Church, until recently, remained comfortably in that state until confronted with real people. This project brought about a deeper understanding on both sides, not just a capitulation of the white members to the reality of a changing neighborhood. For some, the changes were deep – a call to deeper faith, a call to set aside their conditioned view of life for a faith view of life.

The project highlighted how deep and serious the cultural divide was regarding the intersection of body and soul activities in worship. However, the project helped to open the discussion on the subject. The project also revealed the anticipated result of how deeply entrenched some people's racial prejudices were, and surprisingly how some could change, choosing the values of their faith over the conditional values of their culture. Some people mirrored Alport's categories, by withdrawing from an active church life, a form of accommodation. Other people like Annette, (Verbatim #4), showed deeper values at work in their lives. She and a half dozen others continued an active life in the congregation. White racism had been at work in the church but faith values generated a new sense of community. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's paper "The American Dream" from Negro History Bulletin, Vol. 36, p. 12 (May 1968) as quoted in A Black Theology and Liberation (1986) said, "What affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be." The whole of Queens Reformed Church, black and white members, had been stifled because the older white community tried to limit the influence of the non-whites who

were not allowed to be who they were. In A Theology and Liberation (1986), James Cone said, "America's white theology has not been involved in the struggles for black liberation. It is more a reflection of the theology of the oppressors that sanctioned the genocide of Amerindians and enslaved black people" (p. 4). "White theology became compatible with white racism. Black theology only appeared because white theology failed to relate the gospel to the pain of being black. Black theology is a theology of liberation, the work of God" (p. 6).

The racism the black members of the Queens Reformed Church felt was the racism white theology allowed and supported. Louis Schoen, as quoted in Ending Racism in the Church (1980) by Davies and Hennessey wrote "It is not enough for whites to try to be non-racist. The perverse racist system empowers them. White Christians were passive in the civil rights movement and in so doing did not see how they supported the status quo" (p.10). This was the position of the Queens Village Reformed Church. They did not fight against or resist the racist culture of their church, so in effect they were part of the system.

This project caused some to see how wrong their own version of the system was. They then let go of their defenses and joined the non-whites in a unity of fellowship.

V. B:

1. Contributions Clarifying and Expanding:

Religious Principles: Change is possible. People can choose their faith values over their conditioned ones, so it is important to present people with the opportunity to make better decisions. It should be noted that people are often unaware of their behavior because it is all they have known. It is their culture. It is the way they think. Not until they are presented with an alternative can they choose a better way. Carol Ochs and Kerry Olitzky say in Jewish Spiritual Guidance (1997), "As spiritual guides we can play a role in every circle of

community...as seekers our choices too are meaningful and fraught with significance. We are part of the struggle between dedication and meaninglessness" (p. 179). Not everyone can or will change but that does not mean the effort is not worthwhile. When it comes to rights and wrongs, the pastor or facilitator is not really neutral. He or she has a viewpoint and tries to move the community in that direction. I was not actually able to remain a neutral parent as the children of the church vied for influence, because I felt there was a right versus a wrong to the issue. However, I did try to be patient as we worked on the issues. I was able to be pastor to all the people. But when the moment of confrontation came (Seminar 4), it was obvious what side I was taking, especially after I called the five white members aside to discuss the racist feelings being expressed. I felt I handled the situation the right way by trying to help people have a change of heart, and thereby keeping as many people as possible in the church. The slow, steady approach was the right way to act as a catalyst for change.

V. B 2:

It felt from the beginning that the ideals in Irvin D. Yalom's book The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy (1950) would be a doubtful method for a short-term group. Nonetheless, some principles that Yalom stated were at work. "Group cohesiveness as the therapeutic factor...exerts a therapeutic influence" (p. 47) and "All can be accepted by the therapy group so long as norms of nonjudgmental acceptance and inclusiveness are established. This creates the necessary cohesiveness" (p. 49). But the seminar group I established was set up with divergent feelings on issues and nonjudgmental acceptance and inclusiveness were not the ground rules, even if they were the goals. Could the seminar work therapeutically? Interestingly, even though the group had a stilted beginning, with people speaking in short sentences and not in conversation with each other, by the fourth seminar a group feeling had

emerged, and they were talking to each other. I believe this could have evolved into a therapy group where the acceptance goal was the norm. But the goal of the seminar was to bring the topic of racism to the table so all could discuss it and move forward with a culturally blended service. Initially people were reluctant to speak their minds, not wanting to offend or not wanting to be out on a limb alone.

In the first seminar, the first seven of eight voices were all white people, as if they were staking their claim to dominate. By session four the people were speaking to each other and responding to statements. Seminar four was the last scheduled seminar. If the non-white people wanted a voice, now was the time. In particular, George and Roland brought the topic up right away. Yalom was right when he said our inner issues rise to the top when in a group. The issues had to be faced and justice done. The group experience, although loosely structured compared to Yalom's ideals, still acted as a catalyst to bring about change.

C. Contribution to ministry in a wider context:

Clergy should not shy away from or be reluctant to tackle hard issues. The church, temple and mosque have a basis to call for change among their people. If the change and the process to bring it about is done correctly, it will help people to grow into their better selves, the selves they express in their faith. The result is that a whole community can be improved. Such an experience in one place could be of encouragement in other congregations. This could also be used in an inter-religious way so that two or three faith communities could grow in understanding of each other, thereby improving the relationships for all outside the congregations. I could possibly offer my services as a consultant to other churches going through this struggle.

D. Implication for future ministry:

For me, the project raised my level of confidence in people and in God to bring about positive change. I can be a catalyst for change. The experience strengthened me in my resolve to stand fast for what I believe is just, even in the face of persistent negative forces. I must be alert to present day issues that need support, such as xenophobia, with regard to immigrants and illegal aliens, homophobia, and the continuing issues of race in America. For me it means working to develop multi-cultural congregations if that is what the neighborhood calls for. Inclusiveness is for me a central theme in ministry. Diversity adds richness to the soul and brings enlightenment. Lastly, I will work to not let the narrow-minded people take over the church. Neither will I try to exclude them in hopes they might change. The church belongs to all the people, and as the pastor I must encourage all to participate, sharing power and ideas.

"So what's a church (or the pastor) to do? For openers, we can be honest – 'Tell the truth.' Racism exists, even in the church. Despite our good intentions, despite our high ideals, we are still a long way from where God calls us to be on the issue. Some problems solve themselves if you just leave them alone. Racism isn't one of them." (From a paper, *Race Matters* by the Rev. Louis Lotz of Morningside Reformed Church, Iowa).

Introduction to the Seminars and Verbatim

The worship seminars had a total of 17 different participants, or half the active congregation. On average 13 people attended and participated each time. On a few occasions, others attended, but their names are not recorded because they did not speak. The participant make up was:

10 white	7 non-white
8 long standing members all white	9 newer members (less than 10 years) 3 white, 6 non-white
12 women	5 men
1 under age 20	5 20-40 years old
	11 over 40 years old

Key:	WF	White female	N/WF	Non-white female
	WM	White male	N/WM	Non-white male

* * * * *

The seminar reveals the tension in the church on the topic of race. In Seminar Verbatim #1, the non-whites are slow to speak. The white members speak freely as if they were trying to make sure their voices were heard. Cultural differences and taste are at best hinted at. In Verbatim #2 differences in music are mentioned but no one engages in cross-member discussion. The members are not comfortable enough to trust one another on the subject of race and culture. By the third seminar, interaction is beginning to occur. Differences of opinion are beginning to emerge. The fourth verbatim starts with a direct statement on the

topic of race. The non-white members' resistance to dealing with the subject has evaporated. The group experience brought the significant issue of racism to the forefront.

In the early seminars, the group was resisting the natural direction of the topics of race and culture, wanting to avoid conflict. No one wanted the church to split apart. But once the topic of race broke out, everyone worked to preserve the church. The need to be heard on the subject was accomplished. Racial tensions were now able to be dealt with in an upfront, conscious manner. Most moved to suggest corrections to the problems.

I tried to maintain a non-anxious presence, allowing the group process and dynamics to work. It did.

WORSHIP

Seminar #1 Presentation Outline

January 16, 2000 - 11:30 a.m.

Part A:

What is worship and why we do it

- Root meaning **worth / ship**
- We worship God for all God's worth
 - Know the value of God
 - Oscar Wilde said: "We know the price of everything but the value of nothing."
 - What is the value of God to us?
- The catechism (Presbyterian) question #4 "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."
 - The first half of the sentence is interpreted by the second half.

Why is God worthy of worship?

- Creator - Psalm 95, Genesis 1
- Nature, power, eternal - Exodus 34:14
- Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness - Psalms, Isaiah 6:1-7
- Instructed to worship - 1st Commandment - Exodus 20:1
- The Temple/Tabernacle - Exodus 35-39 - elaborate systems of homage and sacrifices

New Testament text regarding power, holiness and love of God

- Luke 5:8 - Peter
- John 20:28 - Thomas - Power of the Resurrection
- Matthew 28:9 - Disciple
- Romans 12:1,2
- Revelation

Love

- Human love
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Lover
- God's love - John 3:16

Part B:

Theological Understanding

- God alone is worthy

- God desires a relationship with us
- +We are made for relationship
- We are made for a relationship with God - "The heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." - St. Augustine

Worship is an act of knowing God's worth. As creatures we will worship something:

- Ourselves
- Another person
- Pleasure
- A philosophy

All is idolatry. Only God is worthy of our devotion:

- Out of respect for God's worth
- Out of Thanksgiving of God's love and redemption

Part C:

Reformed Church of America Directory for Worship

- "Worship is the action of acknowledging God's worth through penitence, forgiveness, joy, growth in the awareness of God" - All happen in worship.
- Worship is a verb (bowing, prostration, kneeling, singing, praying are acts to acknowledge the greatness of God.
- Worship is a dialogue between the worshiper and God: An expression of admiration, confession and forgiveness.
- The reception of God's word - The living presence of Christ as found in scripture and the sacraments.
- Worship is losing oneself in the encounter with God and God's greatness. Karl Barth said: "Sunday is an hour by which we see the rest of the week."
- Source of worship of Christians:
 - God is revealed in Israel and in Jesus, the Christ
 - The Revelation as set in scripture - Old and New Covenants
 - The Holy Spirit who enlightens our hearts to understand
- Reality - Worship deals with all of life.
- The structure of worship of the church comes from the synagogue:
 - The word is central - read and preached
 - Prayers are offered - intercessions
 - Sacrifice - The temple sacrificial system for Yom Kippur and Passover
 - Sacrament - Jesus is the sacrificial lamb of God who takes away sin.
- Offering
- Hymns/Psalms

Discussion Verbatim for Seminar #1

January 16, 2000

Question: Describe one of the more important aspects of worship in your life?

WF-75 I remember music the most.

WF-70 Me too. Our organist was so dedicated. She had the choir singing way beyond our ability. Of course we had paid section leaders then and I know we can not afford them now.

Everyone knew the old hymns and loved them.

WM-70 And the ushers, they were all dressed in suits and ties. Everything was precision. We actually rehearsed how we come down the aisle. Of course, it was a more formal period of time. Wouldn't go over today.

WF-50 There was a committee or was it the women's guild that made sure everything was polished.

WM-55 The day I came back to church I was so afraid. I was most touched by candlelight services (the mystery). Dorothy Summers sang "Oh Holy Night."

WM-65 I'm from a Seventh Day Adventist Church from Jamaica. I couldn't wait to leave – to confining. I visited a Reformed Church and I found my home.

WM-40 I like our communion style – it is served instead of getting in line. And everyone waits to eat.

WF-40 Broadway Tabernacle (a church) has all different races. Not until World Communion Day with the three congregations did we do it.

N/WF-75 African dance and music and lively music were memories of past days.

N/WF-45 When a little girl, my mother worked so we didn't get to church often. All white people were on the bus when we did go. Now I like to see black and white together.

N/WF-75 I like the traditional style.

of the My daughter was married with a communion service – made us all one, all part experience.

N/WM-50 I was raised Roman Catholic. The sign of the cross was powerful. I felt guilty being in a Protestant church; through the outreach program for children I became comfortable with this church.

WF-70 First time Pastor Lucy held up a baby to be baptized, it helped the congregation feel more part of it.

WF-60 Prayer and quiet time mean a lot to me.

WF-40 Relationship and a sense of community or potential community with people is what I want.

WF-18 I like it when the youth take part.

Pastor We've had a very varied experience, so no wonder it's difficult to blend our service.

WORSHIP

Seminar #2 Presentation Outline

January 23, 2000 - 11:30 a.m.

Part A:

What is Liturgy?

- Meaning of word: Liturgy comes from Latin

Lit - Laity

Urge - Work

Liturgy is the work of the Laity.

Part B:

Biblical Information (BCE – Pre Temple time)

- Family worship
 - Sacrifices, visiting prophets
- Tabernacle period
 - Priesthood
 - Sacrifice
 - Songs
 - The Law recounted
- Temple period
 - Priesthood (rotation system)
 - Sacrifice
 - Chorus and orchestra
 - Reading of the Torah
 - Prophets
- Synagogue system - Teaching center
 - Reading the Torah - Prophets
 - Commentary (Sermon)
 - Songs/Psalms
 - Prayers
- New Testament CE Time
- Early Church (Acts 2: 42-47)
 - Meet at the temple
 - Apostle's teaching: fellowship, communion, prayer, psalms, testimonies, eating together,
 - witnessing, evangelism preaching.
- Formative Church
 - Household churches - No buildings
 - Laity participation

Apostle guided - appointed elders to oversee, deacons elected to distribute to the needy, bishop to oversee larger areas.

The service of word of sacrament were standard with prayers and hymns, fellowship meals

Classes for converts called catechumens.

Easter vigils and service of baptism.

Development of church year calendar.

- Fourth Century - After Emperor Constantine conversion
 - Church buildings came into being and developed from plain to cathedrals over 1900 years.
 - Church furniture
 - Clergy dress
 - Monastic life views and monk's formal liturgy develops (with prayers, music, lectionary readings, sermons, sacraments).
- Types of music developing - Found in Jewish scripture
 - Hymns, psalms, songs, processions, chants, responses
- Types of prayers - First found in the synagogue
 - Invocation
 - Litanies
 - Eucharistic - Thanksgiving
 - Prayers of the people - Intercession
- Types of instruments
 - All with biblical reference (lyres, drums, lute)
- Music evolved to present day with multicultural influences
 - Organ, piano, percussion, strings, woodwinds, brass
 - Style in church include: classical, medieval, contemporary, jazz, Latin, rock and roll, bands, orchestra, choirs, solos, congregational singing.
- Vestment
 - Clergy clothing developed, especially after the pastors were viewed as priests.
 - The priesthood clothing of the Old Testament took on more importance. Church furniture continued to develop with altars, fountains, and eventually pews.

Part C:

Language in the Use of Liturgy

- Early Church - First three centuries used Greek then reverted to Latin.
- Other areas used their own language:
 - Syrian
 - Teutonic
 - Hindu
 - Egyptian
 - Arabic
 - Aramaic
- After the 5th century, western churches under Rome used Latin.
- Eastern Church or Byzantine Church continued to use Greek and groups beyond Europe continued with their local languages.

- By the 16th century, nationalism in Europe was growing and the Protestant Reformation reinforced the desires of independence.

The language of scripture and liturgy is always being updated to the needs of the people, words to communicate the message and enable people to worship.

Verbatim from Seminar #2

January 23, 2000

Question: What should be in our liturgy, our work of worship?

N/WF-50 Praise music and words, joyfulness

N/WF-65 People participating reading scripture, giving a homily

WF-70 Quiet time for meditation, but train people in the traditions as well as add new things.

N/WF-35 Could have duets - piano and organ

WM-55 Ambience – Our church is too bright – needs more mystery

N/WF-40

WM-40 How are we attractive to younger people? How do we appeal to them?
(Pianist)

N/WF-75 The enrichment with images, crosses and crucifixes

N/WM-60 Solos and special music

WF-70 John should do more accompanying on piano or organ

WM-70

N/WF-50 I'm from Jamaica – I like lively music with drums to help.

N/WF-75 Not all the time – I'm from Haiti. I too am used to lively music and clapping.

N/WM-60 I'm from Jamaica too. I don't want an island church. We're mixed in our church so let's have a mix.

N/WM-50 I like old traditions but something new would be good too.

N/WF-40 Sure, we can try some new things.

N/WM-50 Need to impact life. Walter (organist) is a big part of it. He can apply it. The organ needs to control the church spirit.

WM-55 Let's add only one new song per service. The others must be familiar.

WF-70 Vocal soloists add life.

Pastor In summary, I would say we feel music is a very important part of our liturgies, and we need to work on what we are doing.

WORSHIP

Seminar #3 Presentation Outline

February 6, 2000 - 11:30 a.m.

Part A:

What is the place of movement in worship?

Let's discuss how we feel doing each of these motions.

- Hands
 - Ordination - Laying on of hands
 - Prayer - Lifting up our hands
 - Greeting - Benedictions
- Kneeling
 - Humility
- Prostrating
 - Humility
- Genuflect
 - Respect
- Crossing
 - Remembering
- Modes of Baptism
 - Immersion (whole body experience)
 - Sprinkling
- Holy Water
 - Remembering baptism
- Eyes
 - Open or shut
- Head
 - Bowed or not

Part B:

Cultural expression in dance movements of Anne Natchusali from Malawi, Africa

Verbatim #3

February 6, 2000

This was our meeting after we attended the Avodah dance rehearsal at HUC/JIR, the liturgical dance experience (2/1/00). I asked those who attended the Avodah dance rehearsal to share their experiences, especially since it fit into the topic of movement.

N/WF-45 Movement in dance was a unique learning experience.

N/WM-50 Any movement you make with the thought of God is good.

N/WF-50 Movement releases feeling, as with dancing and clapping

Pastor Jereen, would you share your experience at Avodah?

N/WF-45 Well, she (the director, Dr. Joanne Tucker) had us act out the biblical text about Moses. We had to get to Moses but were blocked by the leaders. We had to try to move around them. It took a lot of energy and I realized how hard it is to resist God's will. It takes a lot of energy.

Pastor How did you learn that lesson, that it takes a lot of energy to resist God's will?

N/WF-45 We had to move a lot.

Pastor So, can dance play a part in worship?

N/WF-50 Oh yes. I was there. It was a good experience.

WM-40 Can be a blend of some things. I'm blind so I am not fully able to get into the whole service, but as I listen I get it more and more.

Pastor Besides dance, what other movements do we make in the service?

(People
called out
answers)

 Standing and sitting
 Raising hands in the benediction
 Passing the peace - shaking hands and hugging
 Kneeling
 Laying on of hands in ordination
 Modes of baptism
 Roman Catholics cross themselves and genuflect

Pastor So, we do a lot of moving in the service and it aids worship. What did you feel in ordination with the laying on of hands?

N/WF-40 Well, like everyone was with me.

N/WM-50 For me it was feeling secure about God wanting me to do this.

WF40 Pastor, what's it like to raise your hands in the benediction?

Pastor Good one...I feel like I am trying to be a channel for God's blessing in the congregation's life. It also has a feeling of connection to our biblical past.

Pastor So, can liturgical dance fit in?

WF-70 We never danced before in our church.

WF-40

Pastor

We can try something.

Well, next time we will experiment, creating a service for Palm Sunday. All who want to participate can.

WORSHIP

Seminar #4 and Verbatim (No presentation)

February 13, 2000

Review session about what is best for Queens Village Reformed Church and to develop a service reflecting what we learned. This turned into a second session and a rehearsal. There was no presentation except a short discussion on church architecture.

- Pastor What will our worship service look like?
- WF-75 We, in the past, sang the great hymns of the church with a lot of feeling. We didn't need to clap and dance.
- N/WF-50 Yes, but today the service is dead. We need clapping to liven up the service. We need to be lively to get new people.
- N/WM-45 In the past the RCA (our denomination) the Dutch church allowed slavery, and in fact they traded in slaves. This might be why neighbors don't respond to us.
- WF-45 What does that have to do with us today? No one knows that.
- N/WM-45 The attitude could still be felt.
- N/WM-60 The Dutch church didn't even allow Quakers or Jews to worship in the area at first. Only the Dutch church was allowed. There might have been hangings too. Quakers were not allowed to worship. I have an article about the Remonse.
- WM-40 What's a Remonse?
- N/WM-60 It's a paper written by local people in the 17th century asking the church leaders in Holland to grant persons the right for freedom of religious expression. The Remonse was approved and granted freedom of religious practice for Quakers, Jews and North Africans.
- Pastor The Remonse was the precursor to our Constitution which provided for the freedom of religion a hundred years later in the "no establishment of religion" clause. The Remonse is in the State House of Albany, New York.
- N/WM-60 There are also old houses here on Long Island that have cellars that were used to hold the slaves brought by the Dutch traders until they could be sent south.
- N/WM-45 I think these attitudes might still carry on.

WF-60 Well, I don't think I'm prejudiced, but I don't know.

WF-45 I think it's a ridiculous idea. I know everyone here and we get along.

N/WF-35 Well I have felt "it" at times. Not from you (previous speaker) but others. It's not up front but I feel it.

WF-18 Really? I don't but I'm white.

WF-60 Well, does it affect worship?

N/WF-75 It might; I think so. It limits what we can do. I like to clap but M doesn't. What do we do? Is my view less than M's?

WF-35 I hope we can have more balance. No one should leave. Can't we do more for each other?

Well, I know change can be good. But it is also hard. I've been a member 50 years, so change is hard for me. I don't want to lose what I liked.

WF-45 Yes, just because it's new doesn't mean it's good.

But we need to try something. We cannot stay the same.

WM-40 We also need to do things that would invite young people.

I agree.

N/WF-75 So, where are we?

N/WM-60 Well, at least some issues are on the table, feelings about race and different views.

Pastor We need to meet again and plan the service.

Appendices

Worship Bulletin

THE QUEENS REFORMED CHURCH

A Congregation of The Reformed Church in America

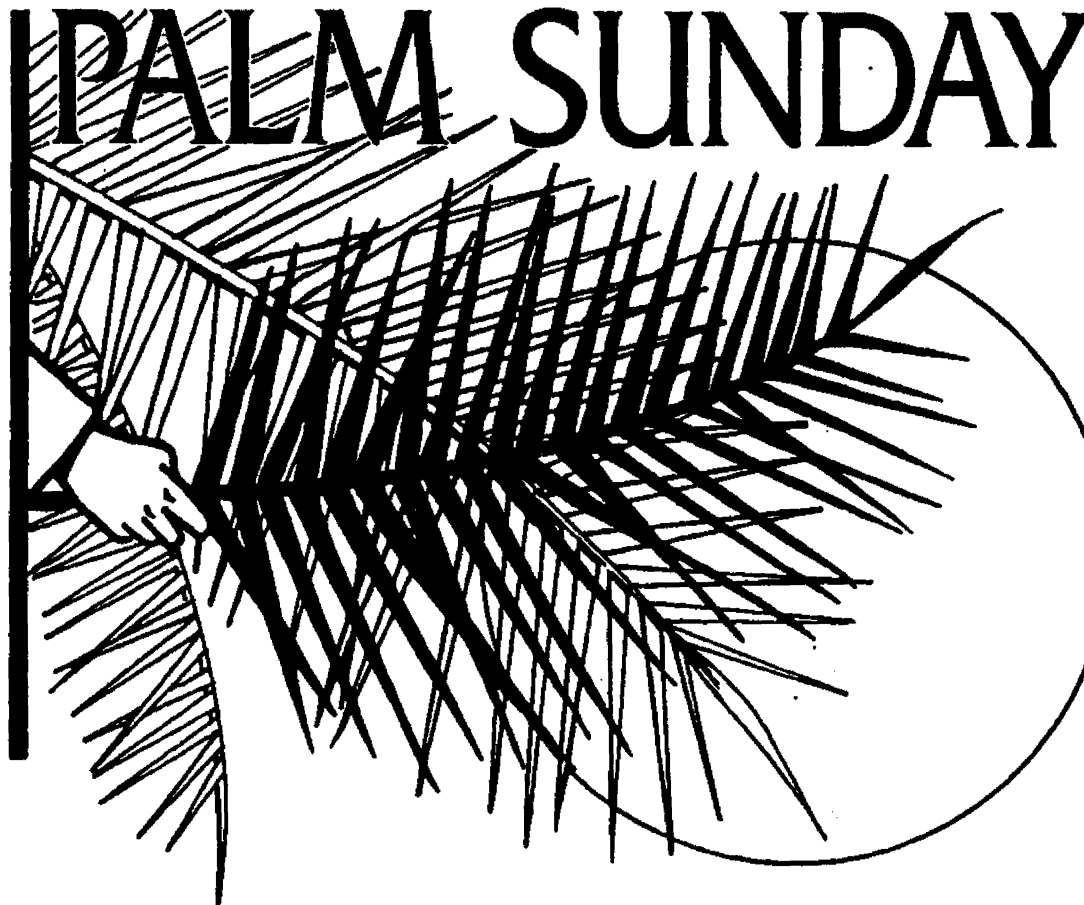
94-79 Springfield Boulevard, Queens Village, NY 11428

Phone # (718) 465-4309 * Fax # (718) 736-0221

Rev. Carl Rosenblum, Interim Pastor

Mr. Walter O'Donnell, Organist/Choir Director

**SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 2000
10:00A.M.**



RINGING OF THE LINCOLN BELLS

PRELUDE As a crowd gather outside Jerusalem there is a great noise as Jesus mounts a donkey and begins to make his way to the gates of the city. Waving palm branches, they cry out, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

John 12:12-15

CHIMES

*CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 24:7-10

Leader: Lift up your heads, O gates!
Right Side: be lifted up, O ancient doors!
Left Side: that the King of glory may come in.
Leader: Who is the King of glory?
Left Side: the Lord, strong and mighty,
Right Side: the Lord, mighty in battle.
Left Side: Lift up your heads, O gates!
Right Side: be lifted up, O ancient doors!
Leader: that the King of glory may come in.
All: Who is this King of glory?
Leader: The Lord of hosts,
All: he is the King of glory.

*HYMN #124 *"All Glory Laud and Honor"*

*INVOCATION

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Unison: God of wisdom, it is your permissive love that both allows and requires us to encounter suffering in life, so that we might mature in spiritual stature and prove our discipleship. We confess that we prefer a theology that lets Jesus carry our cross rather than our picking up our part in carrying his. We confess that we desire to share in Christ's glory, but not in his suffering. But we delude ourselves when we believe we can be true followers of Jesus without sharing his cross, without bearing the pain of the scoffer for the sake of our faith, without turning the other cheek. We fail to understand that it is in losing our life that we find it, in sharing the cross that we learn the fullness of the power of your Spirit. Forgive us, we pray.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends believe the good news of the gospel.
People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
Leader: Praise the Lord! (Psalm 150)
Left Side: praise God in his sanctuary;
Right Side: praise him in his mighty firmament!
Left Side: Praise him for his mighty deeds;
Right Side: praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
Leader: Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!
Right Side: Praise him with tambourine and dance;
Left Side: praise him with strings and pipe!
All: Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Leader: Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
All: Praise the Lord!

*HYMN #66 *"Praise the Savior, Ye Who Know Him"*

**SCRIPTURE LESSON
CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

Old Testament

Isaiah 50:4-9a

***GOSPEL LESSON**

John 9:1-41

-read by the adult seminar class

MUSIC SELECTION

-John San Phillippi

SERMON

"The Night"

-Mr. Robert Greiner

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Unison: Give thanks with a grateful heart, Give thanks to the Holy One.
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son, (repeat)
And now let the weak say "I am strong",
Let the poor say "I am rich" because of what the Lord has done for us (repeat)
Give thanks, give thanks.

COMMUNICANT'S CLASS 2000

-Corey Baiden, Daniel Heuser, Jasmyne Trinidad

SHARING THE CROSS

***DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Remain Standing)**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

*Oh how He loves you and me! Oh how he loves you and me!
He gave His life, what more could he give?
Oh how He loves you! Oh how He loves me! Oh how He loves you and me!*

LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts and debtors)

***HYMN #143**

"Lift High the Cross"

***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Congregation May Stand

PLEASE HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

Termilia Cadichon, Gladys Middlemas, Pastor Lopez, Violet Hall, Mildred Iovale, Doreen Folmer, Pastor Carl Rosenblum, Pastoral Search Committee, and your Consistory.

TODAY:

-We welcome all to worship this morning. Please join us for Coffee Hour.

-Preaching this morning is Elder Bob Greiner, Vice President of Consistory.

-Participants in today's worship service:

Adult Seminar Class - George Aaron, Roland Johnson, Marie Lubin, Termilia Cadichon, Elaine Williams, John San Phillippi, Robert Greiner, Jereen Walton.

Special music - Children's Choir: Brandon Baiden, Jordan Johnson, Sean Sparrow, Kara Johnson, Whitney Walton, and Jonathan Spence.

Piano- John San Phillippi.

Drummers - Corey Baiden, Brandon Baiden, Sean Sparrow, Marie Lubin, Roland Johnson, Kara Johnson, Termilia Cadichon.

Communicant's Class - Corey Baiden, Daniel Heuser, Jasmyne Trinidad

-The Benevolence offering for the month of April is for Sickle Cell Anemia. You may make a donation using the envelopes in the pew. Please indicate the cause.

AT 11:30-12:30p.m.: Adult Education Topic: Philip Yancey's book "What's So Amazing About Grace?"

THIS WEEK

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE:

Pastor's schedule for the week of April 16th, is as follows:

Sun. - 9:00a.m- Tues. - 3-7:00p.m.; Thurs. - 3-9:00p.m. Fri. 11a.m.-4:00p.m.

Pastor Carl can be reached at (718) 391-0181 or his cell phone at (917) 568-1001 for immediate contact. There is voice mail on both phones.

Mail may be sent to P.O. Box 595, New York, N.Y. 10011-0595

SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE:

Monday-Wednesday and Friday 9:00a.m.-12:00p.m; Thursday-4:00-7:00p.m.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 3:30-6:30p.m.: Daybreak (afterschool program). For information call 465-6361.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20th 6:30p.m.: *Maundy Thursday*. Soup, salad and bread supper with a mini seder.

AT 7:30p.m.: *Maundy Thursday Communion Service*.

FRIDAY, APRIL 21st at 12:00 noon-3:00p.m.: *Good Friday Service*. The Seven Last Words.

NEXT SUNDAY - APRIL 23rd - EASTER

AT 9:00a.m.: Easter Breakfast. Everyone is asked to bring Easter bread and cakes to share.

AT 10:00a.m.: Worship Service. *Easter. The Great Day*. The Day of Resurrection.

AT 11:30-12:30p.m.: Adult Seminar - Holiday recess.

THIS MONTH

SUNDAY, APRIL 30th: Guest Preacher. Pastor Carl is attending the 175th Anniversary of his previous congregation, Brooding Presbyterian in Manhattan. All the old and former clergy are attending.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A NOTE FROM THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

We would like to hear from you the congregation concerning your favorite hymns. There will be a box in the narthex to give us a list of your favorites. Walter and the Pastor will work them into the worship services and once in a while we will have a hymn sing to enjoy old favorites even more.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES FOOD PANTRY

Please remember the Our Lady of Lourdes Food Pantry the next time you go shopping and pick up an extra item or two. They would be happy to accept donations of canned meats or vegetables, juices, spaghetti sauce, tuna fish, soups, cereal, instant potatoes, powered milk, rice, tea bags, sugar, peanut butter and jelly. If you know of someone who needs food, call OUTREACH at (718) 479-0924. You may leave your donation in the basket in the narthex. Thank you very much.

FLOWERS

You can provide flowers for the chancel! The cost is \$15.00 per bouquet and the flowers are yours to take home after worship (the vase must be returned!). To order flowers, simply sign up on the chart in the Narthex and remember to print clearly! We ask that flowers be paid in advance. "Flower" envelopes are on the tables at both sanctuary entrances.

SHARING THE CROSS

Today you have received a cross made by our confirmation class of April 2000. The cross is made from nails and a crude piece of twine.

The cross of Jesus was crude, a symbol of shame and death. But it was out of love for us that Jesus endured the cross giving his life as an atonement for our sins. Now we are invited by God's grace and mercy to be children of God. Today the cross is a symbol of love and the empty cross a reminder of the Resurrection. Jesus lives.

During Easter season we ask you to share this cross with a friend. The first person who admires the cross after Easter remove it and give it to them and tell them what this means to you.

Other Pre Seminar Preparation

THE QUEENS REFORMED CHURCH

A Congregation of The Reformed Church in America
94-79 Springfield Boulevard, Queens Village, NY 11428
Phone # (718) 465-4309 * Fax # (718) 736-0221

Rev. Carl Rosenblum, Interim Pastor
Mr. Walter O'Donnell, Organist/Choir Director

World Communion Sunday

Sponsored by the three congregations that worship at QRC

Iglesia De Cristo-La Roca

The church of the Rock
An RCA Congregation

Sae Buck

(Sunrise)
Korean Presbyterian Church

Queens Reformed Church

RCA

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1999

11:00A.M.



Give us today
our daily bread.

Matthew 6:11

RINGING OF THE LINCOLN BELLS

PRELUDE

CHIMES

***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)**

Leader: Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. (in 3 languages)

People: Hallelujah. Amen.

***HYMN** (sing in your own language)

"How Great Thou Art"

(see insert)

***INVOCATION**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (offered in silence)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Brothers and sisters, in Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven. (in 3 languages)

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(Place your offering in envelope and designate it for your congregation. Loose change will be donated to an agreed upon mission course)

ANTHEM

-The Korean Youth Choir

***DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** (Remain Standing)

***HYMN**

"Alababra"

(see insert)

SCRIPTURE

John 21:4-12

Korean - James Kim

Spanish - Aida-Elena Terreo

English - Tyrone Walton

***A SONG OF GLORY**

Unison: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be!
World without end! Amen! Amen!

SERMON

"Come and Have Breakfast"

The Reverend Antonio Lopez, Pastor of Iglesia de Cristo-La Roca RCA

LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

Oh how He loves you and me! Oh how he loves you and me!

He gave His life, what more could he give?

Oh how He loves you! Oh how He loves me! Oh how He loves you and me!

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts and debtors)

(Pray in your own language)

-The Rev. Carl Rosenblum

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION (see insert) -The Rev. Tae Hoon Kim

Both wine are served. Please hold the elements until all are served and then we partake together.

*HYMN (sing in your own language)

"Amazing Grace" (see insert)

*BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Congregation may stand

PLEASE HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

*Termilia Cadichon, Gladys Middlemas, Rev. Tony Lopez, Annette Nehr, Violet Hall,
Rev. Carl Rosenblum, Pastoral Search Committee, and your consistory.*

TODAY:

The QRC special benevolence offering is postponed until next week.

- The flowers this morning are presented in *God's Love* by Marie Lubin.
- We welcome all to worship this special Communion Sunday. Please join us for our Pot Luck Lunch following worship.
- **AT 4:15p.m.:** A Celebration of Full Communion and Recognition of Ministers as affirmed in "A formula of Agreement" by four churches of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America and United Church of Christ. The Rev. Barbara Kay Lundblad will be preaching. Participants honored guests and 100-Voice Choir from the four communions. Everyone is encouraged to attend from all churches. To be held at Riverside Church 120th Street and Riverside Drive, Manhattan.
- Reformed Church World Service (RCWS) has sent \$15,000 to the Reformed Church of South Bound Brook, New Jersey, and \$5,000 to the North Branch Reformed Church in Bridgewater, New Jersey, as an initial response to flooding caused by the torrential rains of Hurricane Floyd. RCWS will send more financial support pending further assessment of needs in the Mid-Atlantic region.
- Our Benevolence offering for the month of October is for the American Cancer Society. You may make a donation using the envelopes in the pew. Please indicate the cause.

THIS WEEK:

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE:

Pastor's schedule for the week of October 3rd is as follows:

Wednesday – 2:00-7:00p.m. Thursday – 2:00-7:00p.m. Sunday – 9:00-?

Pastor Carl can be reached at his new and permanent phone (cell) at 1 (917) 568-1001.

Mail may be sent to P.O. Box 595, New York, N.Y. 10011-0595

SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE:

Monday through Wednesday and Friday: 9:00a.m. -12:00noon; Thursday-4:00-7:00p.m.

THURSDAY, October 7th at 7:30p.m.: Choir Rehearsal.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 3:30-6:30p.m.: Daybreak (an afterschool program). For more information please call (718) 465-6301.

NEXT SUNDAY:

AT 9:00a.m.: Sunday School children ages 5-12 will meet in the Green Room to see Prince of Egypt-The story of Moses video.

AT 11:15a.m.: Adult Education.

AT 6:30p.m.: Youth Group.

나 같은 죄인 살리신

Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound!

Newton, 1779

보통으로 ♩ = 96

(엡 2:5)

AMAZING GRACE: 8.8.8.6.
Traditional American Melody
Arr. by E. O. Excell, 1900

1. 나 같 은 죄 인 살 리 신 주 은 혜 놀 라 와
2. 큰 죄 악 에 서 건 지 신 주 은 혜 고 마 와
3. 이 제 껏 내 가 산 것 도 주 님 의 은 혜 라
4. 거 기 서 우 리 영 원 히 주 님 의 은 혜 로

1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound! That saved a wretch like me!
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re - lieved.
3. Thro' man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I have al - read - y come.
4. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright shin - ing as the sun,

잃 었 던 생 명 찾 았 고 광 명 을 얻 었 네
나 처 음 믿 은 그 시 간 귀 하 고 귀 하 다
또 나 를 장 차 본 향 에 인 도 해 주 시 리
해 처 럼 밝 게 살 면 서 주 찬 양 하 리 라 아 멘

I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.
How pre - cious did that grace ap - pear The hour I first be - lieved!
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first be - gun. A - men.

은혜와 사랑

ALABARE

\\Alabaré, alabaré,
Alabaré a mi Señor.//
Juan vio el número de los redimidos,
De los que alababan al Señor.
Unos cantaban, otros oraban,
Pero todos alababan al Señor.
\\Alabaré, alabaré,
Alabaré a mi Señor.//

THIS MONTH:

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17th: Breast Cancer Walk-a-thon. 5-mile walk begins at the courthouse at Queens Blvd. and Union Turnpike to 63rd Drive Rego Park and return back to the courthouse. For more information please call Julet Marshall at (718) 468-6252.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

OUR LADY OF LOURDES FOOD PANTRY

Please remember the Our Lady of Lourdes Food Pantry the next time you go shopping and pick up an extra item or two. They would be happy to accept donations of canned meats or vegetables, juices, spaghetti sauce, tuna fish, soups, cereal, instant potatoes, powered milk, rice, tea bags, sugar, peanut butter and jelly. If you know of someone who needs food, call OUTREACH at (718) 479-0924. You may leave your donation in the basket in the narthex. Thank you very much.

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SOME OF THE PEOPLE PRESENTING BREAD ARE...

<u>NAME</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
Gladys Torres	Dominican Republic
William Perez	Puerto Rico
Jadira	Columbia
Fanny Chang	Equador
Veronique Rosas	Guatemala
Termilia Cadichon and Marie Lubin	Haiti
Roland Johnson and Kara	Jamaica
Diane Bethmann	USA
Carl Rosenblum	Bread of the Hebrew
Jareen Walton	Southern USA
Kim Trinidad	Portugal and Barbados



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SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2000 CHILDREN'S SERVICE 10:00A.M.

Black History Month

Lord, open unto me

Open unto me-light for my darkness.

Open unto me-courage for my fear.

Open unto me-hope for my despair

Open unto me-peace for my turmoil.

Open unto me-joy for my sorrow.

Open unto me-strength for my weakness.

Open unto me-wisdom for my confusion.

Open unto me-Forgiveness for my sins.

Open unto me-love for my hates.

Open unto me-Self for my self.

Lord, Lord, open unto me! Amen.

-Howard Thurman (1900-1981)

RINGING OF THE LINCOLN BELLS
PRELUDE
CHIMES

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

-Jordan Thompson

Leader: God said, "Surely I know the plans I have for you... plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."
People: Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart..."
Leader: Let us worship and pray together; let us call upon God, trusting in God's wisdom, infinite love, and everlasting mercy.

***HYMN (Insert)**

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

John San Fillipo, accompanying

***INVOCATION**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

-by the Sunday School Class

Old Testament Lesson

II Kings 5:1-14

-read by Brandon Baiden

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

-Kara Johnson

Leader: Let us pray.
Unison: God of love, when things go well with us we readily proclaim your faithfulness and our confidence in you. But we confess we easily entertain doubt when we are in pain, when we pray for help and healing and you are seemingly silent, seemingly taking no action to relieve our suffering. We confess we want answers when and as we want them, for we think we know what we need, what is best for us. We are immediate people who find it difficult to wait; we are willful people who find it difficult to bow to your will; we are often faithless people who find it difficult to trust in the face of adversity. Forgive us we pray, and give us grace to trust your compassion, your purposed, and your ways with us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: In Jesus the Christ, God has granted us grace and answered our prayer.
People: By Jesus' word, life, death, and resurrection, we are assured of the truth that God does not hold our sins against us, but in compassion for our weakness, and with amazing love, heals and transforms us inwardly by the Spirit.
Leader: Glory be to God!

***HYMN #413**

"There Is a Balm in Gilead"

SCRIPTURE

New Testament Lesson

I Corinthians 9:24-27

***A SONG OF GLORY**

Unison: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be!
World without end! Amen! Amen!

(*please remain standing for the reading of the Gospel)

***GOSPEL Mark 1:40-45**

-Sean Sparrow

Leader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

SERMON

"Untouchables"

-The Reverend Carl Rosenblum

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Unison: Give thanks with a grateful heart, Give thanks to the Holy One.
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son, (repeat)
And now let the weak say "I am strong",
Let the poor say "I am rich" because of what the Lord has done for us (repeat)
Give thanks, give thanks.

***DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Remain Standing)**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

-Corey Baiden

LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

*Oh how He loves you and me! Oh how he loves you and me!
He gave His life, what more could he give?
Oh how He loves you! Oh how He loves me! Oh how He loves you and me!*

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts and debtors)

-Corey Baiden

***HYMN #202**

"Father I Adore You"

***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Congregation May Stand

PLEASE HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

*Termilia Cadichon, Gladys Middlemas, Rev. Tony Lopez, Violet Hall, Mildred Iovale
Pastor Carl Rosenblum, Pastoral Search Committee, and your consistory.*

- ♦ Jareen Walton's father past away on February 9, 2000. Jereen and Whitney went to the family home for the service which will be on Monday, February 14, 2000. Donations are being collected by Zimmy to send flowers. Please keep them in prayer.

TODAY:

- We welcome all to worship this morning. Please join us for Coffee Hour.
- Leading worship this morning are the children from the Sunday School:
*Brandon Baiden; Corey Baiden; Kara Johnson; Sean Sparrow; Jordan Thompson;
Whitney Walton.*
- The flowers this morning are presented in God's Love by Marie Lubin.
- Our organist and music director Walter O'Donnell is on vacation for the month of February. Perlene Williams is our organist this morning and she will also be with us on February 13th and 20th.
- The Benevolence offering for the month of February is for the Women's Ministries of The Reformed Church in America. You may make a donation using the envelopes in the pew. Please indicate the cause.
- AT 11:30-1:00p.m.: Adult Education-Worship Study/Seminar following coffee hour. The topics will include: "Why We Worship", "What is Liturgy", Styles and Forms of Worship", "The Reformed Church Directory for Worship", The Place of Music, Prayer, Dance, the Scripture and Sermons", The Meaning of Art and Architecture in Worship.
- AT 1:30p.m.: Communicants Class.

The sermon is based on the OT text from 2 Kings 5:1-14, the story of Naman the Syrian general who had leprosy.

The text is read.

V= voice

V1- God does not ask us to do hard things.

V2-God does ask us to do things that show we believe.

V3-Sometimes we are asked by God that we feel hurts our pride and dignity.

V4-Naman, the great Syrian general, had a terrible disease, leprosy.

V5-If you had leprosy you would eventually die but it would be a slow death as you body disintegrated.

V6-People thought leprosy could be caught simply by touching the sick one the person was contagious. if you were a leper you would have to move out of your house and away from your family. You would live with other lepers.

V7- It was a disease that cause sadness, loneliness, pain as well as death.

V8-God sent a message to Naman by the mouth of a Jewish girl who was a servant in his household. She told him to visit the prophet Elisha who lives in Israel

V-9 Naman went taking thousands of dollars

V10- When the general got to the prophet's house the prophet sent his servant out to tell the general to go dip himself in the Jordan river 7 times.

V11-Naman was furious. He was insulted the prophet did not come out n person to greet him and that the prophet did not want his money. Naman was no beggar ; he could pay what ever the prophet wanted.But the prophet did not charge. You can not buy what god has to give.

V12-Naman was also insulted that he had to bath in the Jordan river which was dirty ; it wasn't even a great river like the rivers back in Syria.He was ready to go home after being snubbed this way.

V13- But Naman's servants convinced him to try it. It won't hurt you. You came all this way . What harm can it cause?

V14- So Naman begins to dip himself in the Jordan river.

V15 - As Christians we remember that Jesus our savior was baptized in the Jordan river as a sign of washing away our sins, the leprosy of the soul.

At this point we will bring the baptismal fount to the people up front for the children's sermon and ask them to dip seven times. Then we declare "you are washed , you are clean you are healed in the name of our Lord Jesus"

THIS WEEK.

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE:

Pastor's schedule for the week of February 13th, is as follows:

Sunday – Tuesday – afternoon; Thursday – afternoon & evening
Pastor Carl can be reached at (718) 391-0181 or his cell phone at (917) 568-1001 for immediate contact. There is voice mail on both phones.
Mail may be sent to P.O. Box 595, New York, N.Y. 10011-0595

SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE:

Monday-Wednesday and Friday 9:00a.m.-12:00p.m.; Thursday-4:00-7:00p.m.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 3:30-6:30p.m.: Daybreak (an afterschool program). For more information please call (718) 465-6361.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17th at 7:00p.m.: *Elders Meeting.*
AT 7:30p.m.: *Consistory Meeting.*

NEXT SUNDAY – February 20th

AT 9:00a.m.: Sunday School for children k-7th grade.

AT 10:00a.m.: Worship. Guest preacher Rev. Luis Perez, Secretary for Hispanic Ministries for the Reformed Church in America. Luis represents the RCA's Hispanic constituency and serves as liaison between Hispanic congregations and church assemblies. The council brings Hispanic leaders together for edification, identifying areas of concern, and planning outreach and involvement.

Pastor Carl is in Chicago visiting his youngest daughter.

AT 11:30-1:00p.m.: No Adult Education or Worship Study/Seminar.

AT 1:30p.m.: No Communicants Class.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

OUR LADY OF LOURDES FOOD PANTRY

Please remember the Our Lady of Lourdes Food Pantry the next time you go shopping and pick up an extra item or two. They would be happy to accept donations of canned meats or vegetables, juices, spaghetti sauce, tuna fish, soups, cereal, instant potatoes, powdered milk, rice, tea bags, sugar, peanut butter and jelly. If you know of someone who needs food, call OUTREACH at (718) 479-0924. You may leave your donation in the basket in the narthex. Thank you very much.

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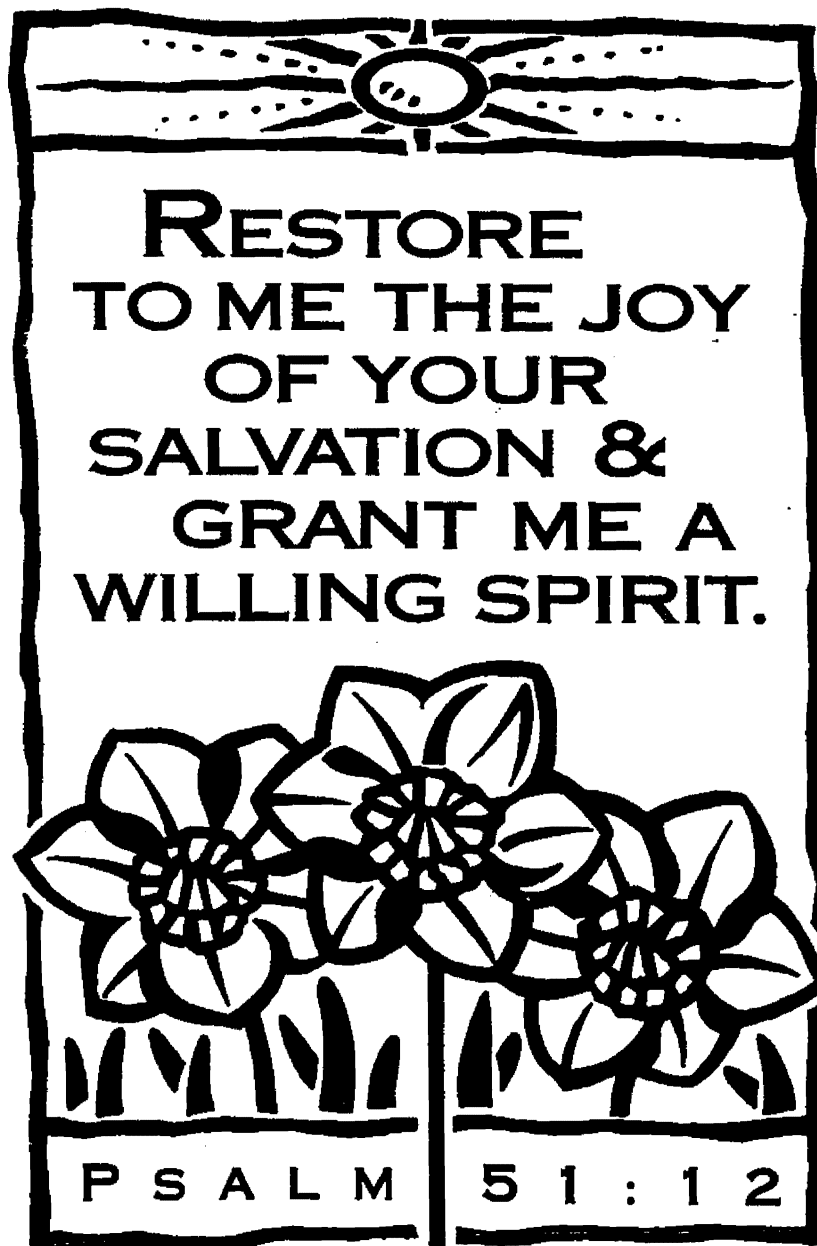
Mr. Walter O'Donnell, Organist/Choir Director

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

YOUTH SUNDAY

SUNDAY, MARCH 12th, 2000

10



CH

10:00A.M.

RINGING OF THE LINCOLN BELLS

PRELUDE

CHIMES

INTROIT

"We Worship and Adore You"

-Youth Choir

(congregation is invited to sing on the 3rd time through)

"We worship and adore You, bowing down before You, songs of praises singing, hallelujahs ringing. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, Amen."

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

-Raquel Reid

Leader: The kingdom of God is at hand. Prepare for God's gift, the reign of Christ upon earth.

People: How shall we prepare? How shall we get ready to receive the Messiah?

Leader: Get ready by prayer; get ready by repentance; get ready by faith. For God requires a people of pure heart and right spirit, a people who trust and obey God.

People: We will prepare ourselves for God's great gift of love, Jesus the Christ, the one sent to be with us, to deliver us in trial and temptation.

Leader: Let us praise and worship the God of our salvation.

***HYMN (insert)**

"We Will Glorify"

***INVOCATION**

-Jasmyne Trinidad

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

-Angel Trinidad

Leader: Let us pray.

Unison: Holy God, as we make our confession, we say with Paul, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate". We admit our failure to be faithful followers of Jesus, to do the good we know. We recognize that even as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, so are we tempted. We doubt in our desert times of anguish or anger, of disease or depression, of injustice or oppression, wondering if we are abandoned, if you really can and will lead us through to waters of new life. When our spirits convict us, when our sins taunt us and hunt us, we are tempted to fall into self-condemnation, and we are unwilling to hear and receive the gospel we so desperately need. Grant us the grace of making a true repentance, and of receiving the gospel of salvation, we pray.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The same God who allows us the temptations of the wilderness, and gives us freedom even to sin, comes to rescue us in our need.

People: Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the one who brings good news. All of us who repent of sin and come to be washed in the waters of the Lord's baptism may be assured we are forgiven.

All: Praise be to God! Amen.

***HYMN (insert)**

"Jehovah Jirah"

(The youth choir will sing it once, congregation join on the second round)

YOUTH CHOIR

"Jehovah Jirah"

-Urban Style

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Old Testament

Genesis 9:8-17

-Raquel Reid

***A SONG OF GLORY**

Unison: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be!
World without end! Amen! Amen!

GOSPEL LESSON Mark 5:9-15

Jasmyne Trinidad

Leader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

YOUTH CHOIR "My Help"

SERMON "Meditations on Faith and Baptism"

-Tyrone Walton and John Williams

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

YOUTH CHOIR "The Battle Belong to the Lord"

***DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Remain Standing)**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Oh how He loves you and me! Oh how he loves you and me!

He gave His life, what more could he give?

Oh how He loves you! Oh how He loves me! Oh how He loves you and me!

LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts and debtors)

***HYMN (insert)** "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Congregation May Stand

PLEASE HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

*Termilia Cadichon, Gladys Middlemas, Rev. Tony Lopez, Violet Hall, Mildred Iovale
Pastor Carl Rosenblum, Pastoral Search Committee, and your consistory.*

TODAY:

- We welcome all to worship this morning. Please join us for Coffee Hour.
- The worship leaders this morning are the youth of QRC - Raquel Reid, Angel Trinidad, Jasmyne Trinidad, Tyrone Walton and John Williams.
- The Benevolence offering for the month of March is for the Warwick Scholarship Fund. You may make a donation using the envelopes in the pew. Please indicate the cause.
- AT 9:00a.m.: Sunday School for children k-7th grade.
- AFTER SERVICE: FUNDRAISER - Bake Potato Luncheon - Bake potato with all the toppings available. The proceeds from this fund-raiser will go to support the youth of QRC. Bake potato, drink and dessert - \$5; Bake potato alone - \$4.
- AT 11:30-12:30p.m.: Adult Education - Adult Seminar - new subject Philip Yancey's book "What's So Amazing About Grace?"
- AT 12:30p.m.: Communicants Class.

THIS WEEK:

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE:

Pastor's schedule for the week of March 12th, is as follows:

Sunday -afternoon; Tuesday - afternoon; Thursday-2p.m.-5p.m.;

Pastor Carl can be reached at (718) 391-0181 or his cell phone at (917) 568-1001 for immediate contact. There is voice mail on both phones.

Mail may be sent to P.O. Box 595, New York, N.Y. 10011-0595

THIS WEEK cont....

SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE:

Monday-Wednesday and Friday 9:00a.m.-12:00p.m;

Thursday-4:00-7:00p.m.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, 3:30-6:30p.m.: Daybreak (afterschool program). For information call 465-6361.

TUESDAY, MARCH 14th at 12:30p.m.: Classis Ministers' Farewell Gathering for Rev. Bill Cameron. Held at Master Grill, 34-09 College Point Blvd., Flushing. R.S.V.P. 359-1553, Bowne St. Church.

NEXT SUNDAY - March 19th

AT 9:00a.m.: Sunday School for children k-7th grade.

AT 10:00a.m.: Worship Service.

AT 11:30-12:30p.m.: Adult Seminar - new subject Philip Yancey's book "What's So Amazing About Grace?"

AT 12:30p.m.: Communicants Class.

THIS MONTH

TUESDAY, MARCH 21st at 6:00p.m.: Classis Meeting at Taiwan Union Church in Long Island City.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26th at 10:00a.m.: Guest preacher. The Rev. Paul Hamilton, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in College Point. Father Hamilton has served as our mediator and will summarize his time with us on March 26th.

TWO SPECIAL FUN OPPORTUNITIES

ON FRIDAY, MARCH 31st at 7:00p.m.: (We will Leave QRC by 6:15p.m. by Church van) to go to Riverdale, Yonkers at the Ethical Culture Society where Justin Hines of the New York Philharmonic Education Staff., will be teaching Community Drumming. He will show us the basics of playing drums in an ensemble setting plus explore the spiritual and physical benefits. This is for beginners and experienced people. Hand drums will be provided but if you have one bring it. This is a fund-raiser event. Normal donation \$10 but for QRC just \$5. Please tell Pastor Carl if you want to go and to reserve a seat in the van.

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 1st at 11:00a.m.: Curt Collier, the leader of the Ethical Cultural Society in Yonkers and a fellow student with Pastor Rosenblum will come to QRC to teach basic drumming as it relates to community building and worship. He will show us drumming in 3 styles, African, Latin and Asian. 10 drums will be provided but bring your own if you can or even bring a cooking pot. This will be lots of fun. Sign up with Pastor Carl.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Anyone seeking the sacrament of baptism for him/her self or for their child please let the pastor know. The sacrament will be celebrate on Easter Sunday, April 23rd.

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

An adult membership class will be held on Saturday April 2nd at 11:30-1:00p.m. Please register with Pastor Carl if you plan to attend.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES FOOD PANTRY

Please remember the Our Lady of Lourdes Food Pantry the next time you go shopping and pick up an extra item or two. They would be happy to accept donations of canned meats or vegetables, juices, spaghetti sauce, tuna fish, soups, cereal, instant potatoes, powdered milk, rice, tea bags, sugar, peanut butter and jelly. If you know of someone who needs food, call OUTREACH at (718) 479-0924. You may leave your donation in the basket in the narthex. Thank you very much.



FLOWERS...

You can provide flowers for the chancel! The cost is \$15.00 per bouquet and the flowers are yours to take home after worship (the vase must be returned!). To order flowers, simply sign up on the chart in the Narthex and remember to print clearly! We ask that flowers be paid in advance. "Flower" envelopes are on the tables at both sanctuary entrances.

MARTIN LUTHER KING – JANUARY 15

REFLECTION QUESTIONS **It might be helpful to reflect on/pray over these questions prior to the Prayer Service.**

Introduction:

Our personal attitudes are largely formed in our homes and in our early schooling and we are products of a society which harbors racist attitudes, whether conscious or unconscious. Who we are today is a result of all our life experiences. Let us reflect on some of those experiences.

1. When did I first become aware that people come in different colors?
2. When did I first become aware that people of color are treated differently?
3. What were my parents' attitudes toward people of color?
4. Have I heard/experienced attitudes of racism in the Congregation...in the past... in the present? In what ways has the Congregation taken a stand against racism?
5. Do I take economic (housing and school) segregation for granted?
6. What was/is my response to the use of derogatory names, stereotyping or offensive jokes with respect to people of color?
7. Are there persons that I have hurt because of my prejudice?
8. How can I go out of my way to get to know people who appear different?
9. What am I/we being called to do to combat racism and to respect diversity?



EXERCISE ON SELF IDENTITY

1. Identity

How do you identify yourself?

2. Race and Ethnicity

How do you feel about your ethnicity and your race? How do you feel about your class, age, religion, gender?

How do you think people of color/white people feel about their color identity?

What were your family's attitudes about your cultural background? How were your family's attitudes the same or different from your ethnic group?

What, if anything, do you do to keep your cultural connections alive, e.g., food, holidays, family traditions, organizations?

Please comment about other significant aspects of your identity such as the region where you grew up, sexual orientation, professional status, etc., if you would like.

What aspects of your identity have you ignored, denied or rejected?

3. Differences

When did you first realize you were different from others? What were your first images of race or color? How did your family deal with difference in ethnicity or race?

What contacts do you have or have you had, with people from a different background, in social situations, work settings, or as clients?

4. Power

What aspects of your identity have empowered you or contributed to feelings of powerlessness?

[Questions are partially adapted from E. Pinderhughes, Understanding Race, Ethnicity and Power, Free Press, 1989, (page 217), and from workshops led and attended by J. Adams.]

Passing Sins

March 3, 1996

This week is Purim, a Jewish holiday celebrating the Feast of Esther, Queen Esther who saved her people.

Esther was raised by her Uncle Mordecai in Persia. The Jewish people had been taken into captivity and Esther's parents died, so Mordecai became her guardian. The King of Persia, Xerxes had been married to Vashti but they had a falling out so Vashti was banished. To comfort the king and to help him forget Vashti, a royal beauty pageant was held to find a new queen. Contestants came from all parts of the Empire. It was the chance of a lifetime like winning the lottery. There were several stages to go through before one could have a chance at being the grand prize winner. You had to get to the capital city, no small feat for poor people in the ancient world. Once you got there, you had to be accepted. Then, if accepted, you went through a beauty treatment that lasted for months. If they were satisfied with the results, you were then chosen as a semifinalist, meaning you were presented to the king and spent the night with him. To get this far in the process was a success because, if the king slept with you, you were his property and at the very least you then lived in the harem and all your basic needs of food, shelter, clothes were met. Of course, today it sounds like a terrible option but in that day, when all women had to look forward to was poverty and many children, the harem offered the basics, maybe a child or two, court gossip, and maybe some intellectual life. Only one out of the hundreds presented to the king would be chosen queen. Of course it was Esther.

But when Esther was taken by her Uncle Mordecai to enter the contest, he told her not to declare her background – that she was Jewish. So, Esther passed as a Gentile. She grew up in Persia, spoke the language and had a Persian name. Esther's Jewish name is Hadassa. She looked like everyone else. No one knew she was Jewish – maybe no one would care, but just in case, no need to make a fuss about it.

"Passing" has been one of humanities survival mechanisms in all cultures in all times. In the 20th century it's daily conversation although the subject was whose passing keeps changing from decade to decade: Blacks and Latinos passing as white; Jews passing as Gentiles or Christians; gays passing as straight; and on occasion women passing as men. Langston Hughes wrote on this subject. In 1953 he had a piece titled Who's Passing for Who? In the story he tells of a black man who would escort whites through Harlem in the 1920's. On one occasion there was a fight in a restaurant and a black man hit a white woman. One of the three white guests jumped to her defense. He was told to mind his own business; they were husband and wife and besides, she wasn't white just light. So he backed down. Things got worse because people felt he didn't defend the woman because she was "colored". Eventually this one white man leaves. The other two said they understood, in fact they too were light-skinned blacks but no one knew – all of them had a good laugh and since all were black folk, they went on to have a great time – all because they were all the same. At four in the morning, the Harlem visitors, the two light-skinned people, as they were getting ready to drive off in a cab said, "by the way we're not really colored, we're white. We just thought we'd kid you by passing for colored just for a little while." The black people were stunned. Who were they really – blacks passing for white or whites passing as blacks?

Just "passing" itself is not the issue but rather why people were passing and the effect of passing on the individuals, as well as on the society that generates such behavior.

Langston Hughes' other story is that of a letter written by a young man to his mother the day after he saw her on the street. He writes saying: "Thank you for not recognizing me while I was in my white company, namely his white girlfriend. If she knew you were my mother, obviously a dark-skinned woman, it would have been over." He goes on to say, "Regarding talking with black people on the street, I'm okay. My looks are suspect-proof. No one can tell by looking that I'm black. Now living in the white world and hearing all the conversation/propaganda about black people, I now understand why it's hard for blacks to get a good job. Ma, what makes passing hard is having to deny your own family. I love you Ma and I hate to do it, but I know you understand. I hope my brother and sister don't feel too bad. I hope they will be willing to not recognize me on the street. Well, Ma, I'm going to marry white, and if any of my kids are born dark, I'll swear they aren't mine. I'm free, Ma. Well, I'm glad there is nothing to stop letters from crossing the color line, so if we can't meet we can write. By the way, I'm taking a P.O. box at the post office for your mail."

Passing meant opportunity -- jobs, freedom to mix in white society, but it also meant a life of denial, of rejecting loved ones, and deception to the point of self hatred. Passing meant he would live in fear of being discovered; even at the birth of his own child, he would deny himself.

Helen Roberson knows a woman whose two black brothers pass for white and so left home and never returned. No one, after years, knows of their whereabouts. But what's wrong with being black? Every black child wants to know.

Jews in Germany in the 30's and 40's lived in terror. In fact if you had Jewish ancestry five generations back, you could be taken.

Assimilation had been in process for decades in Germany and white Europe, but now it was not a matter of opportunity but a life and death issue. But even in our own country, how many Jewish people changed their names to assimilate, to get ahead. The entertainment business is the most obvious example of Jews who learned to pass – Cary Grant, Kirk Douglas, Paul Newman, Debra Winger, Goldie Hawn, Leslie Howard, Lauren Bacall – all Jewish. Maybe it would not have mattered if they had had a Jewish family name, but why take a chance. Besides, many people take stage names.

But what's wrong with being a Jew? That's what every little Jewish boy and girl want to know when they first learn the words "dirty Jew." This is not just an American issue or a white issue, but the issue of a dominant culture's attitude toward its minority members.

A few years ago, a member of the Student House (a young woman) literally had a nervous breakdown. Why? She originally presented herself as a Japanese student studying at Columbia University. But what later came out and drove her to the edge was the fact that she was really of Korean extraction. Her grandfather had been brought to Japan in the 1930's to be a servant. After the war her parents, born in Japan, made their way into Japanese society by pretending they were Japanese. Their looks allowed for

this but now the third generation wants the truth. She cannot live the lie and why should she – what's wrong with being Korean in Japan.

Today the "passing" subject has been gays passing as straights. Can you imagine how terrifying it would be for an adolescent to realize, I don't feel drawn to the opposite sex, I'm drawn to my own. I'm different – Is there something wrong with me? Then, hearing all the comments about queers, faggots, sissy, perverts, child molesters, sodomite and so on – Can you see why a gay person would choose to stay hidden and try to pass. Passing creates as much distortion in the individual, paranoia of being discovered, a hidden life, that says it's better to deceive to get ahead. But it's a lonely life – no one must know or only a very few can know.

I know a gay man who loves his family, but they do not know he is gay. He had a dream in which his father slits a man's throat and then slits his own throat. This is the fear in the gay man about being discovered. But what's wrong with being gay? He knew he was since the age of six.

For anyone who must use passing, the potential for internal disturbance in the psyche is high. Paranoid and schizoid types of behavior cannot help but affect the personality. But passing also creates a sickness in the dominant culture – a paranoia about whose passing or are too many people passing. Are we infiltrated by others who look like us but are not? That's when you begin hearing the word "conspiracy". There's a Jewish conspiracy taking over business or education, there's a gay conspiracy to take over city government, education or the entertainment industry, and when such fears become paranoia, witch hunts and genocide occurs. In this country, white supremacist groups emerge, the religious right form coalitions – all to save one particular view of life.

In the area of fervent issue, the same principle occurs. Women, to compete in a man's world, might feel forced to talk, walk and even dress like a man. Often the worst persecutors are those in hiding – like Roy Cohen and J. Edgar Hoover, and their rejection and hatred of gays. To prove a loyalty to the dominant culture, people will turn on their own kind. Women who weren't feminists turn on feminists; the non-feminist can be loyal to the dominant patriarchal culture because that's where she has her power. Some people who destroyed Jews in the 1940's were Jews who thought that to thwart loyalty would protect them.

The passing eats up a lot of energy for negative purposes, undermines the social cohesiveness of a society, in the name of maintaining social cohesion.

In the story of Esther, there comes a time when the Jewish people were threatened with genocide. Hamen, the prime minister, had come to hate the Jews because Mordecai, a Jew, refused to bow to him. Mordecai bowed to no one (as an act of worship) but God. And so Hamen arranged for a mass execution day throughout the empire. Hamen felt he had lost control, lost his power, so he wanted to get rid of the Jews who he felt undermined the cohesion of the empire. Mordecai goes to Esther and says she must speak to King Xerxes and get him to stop the executions. Esther realizes that stepping across boundaries could cost her her life, but Mordecai challenges her by saying "For such a time as this you have come to the kingdom." It was time for Esther to come out of the closet and as she said "If I perish – I perish. So be it." There is a time to declare yourself so you can live an honest, open, wholesome, integrated life. Now is the time for Esther, and in so doing she might save her people.

Coming out is the call to the gay community in our day. It is really the only way to be healthy and the only way to convince the dominant culture that there is nothing to fear. Being gay is just a variation on a theme and we are everywhere – even as Jews were in every city of Persia at all levels of city, including the palace.

The hope is, because we are so many, so normal, so responsible, so necessary to society, we'll be accepted. There are no guarantees but to come out is necessary. And if I perish, I perish – and some do.

Maybe not literally, but the loss of relationships, loss of jobs, positions, advancement, because you're Jewish or gay or black or Latin or Korean or an Asian is painful. Esther was able to save her people, the king had the executions overridden and the Feast of Purim was celebrated.

Someone said well, it worked – being in the closet worked, passing worked and then coming out worked. Yes it did. But maybe, just maybe, if Esther had refused to be in the closet, then maybe none of this would have happened. If closets weren't necessary, then all would be safer and healthier.

Prejudice is a sin. It's a big issue in the Bible, one the church is called to fight and overcome. As the Epistle lesson says "In it there is neither Jew or Gentile, male or female, free or slave – all are in it." Jews should talk to Samaritans and Samaritans to Jews. God is greater than our ethnocentric view of the world.

Two of our members have given me permission to share part of their stories -- Helen Roberson and Steven Channell. Helen is a light-skinned black woman who has been a pace setter in our congregation. Helen came from Charlotte, North Carolina, where blacks and whites lived very separate lives. Being light-skinned gave her no

privileges in the south because everyone knew her family. Being black brought its heartaches. Before going off to college herself (her father who was born a slave ended up graduating from college to become a pastor), Helen had to find work to pay for her education. So she worked for white people as a maid. One family made her use the back door, and in fact the family, while it allowed their pet cat to eat from their dishes, would not allow Helen to eat from their plates. Another family hired Helen for the summer. The lady who hired her said "since my name is Helen and my daughter's name is Helen, we can't call you Helen. What's your middle name?" Helen replied Elaine. "Elaine? That's too good for you; we'll call you 'Laine.'" All were good church folk, but such prejudice is against the gospel. Living in the north, Helen noticed that being light-skinned had reactions. She felt that she got better service than dark-skinned people, i.e. in banks or retail stores. Unconsciously people responded quicker and were nicer to light-skinned people. But on another occasion, which she found confusing, she went with a dark-skinned friend to an Episcopal Church when segregation was being challenged. Well, all the fine, Christian white folk hovered around her dark-skinned friend and left Helen on the sidelines. Black was in; light was out. Today Helen says when she's snubbed for prejudice, consciously or unconsciously, she just prays. She also laughed telling me that one of her black woman friends told her "with your complexion you could be anyone; in fact, I think you look like a little old Jewish lady." Helen laughs. By the way, Helen will be 85 March 6th.

Steve Channell is bi-racial. His mother is white and his father, who is deceased, was black. The white side of his family rejected them. Steve was raised in the black community in New York City. Steven passes as fully white, but growing up he had

struggles. Today he chooses to live in Manhattan where racial mixing and multicultural living is acceptable. Before, hearing racial slurs like "nigger" caused a violent reaction in him. He wanted to beat the hatred out of others. His last intense experience of this kind was when his car service picked him up late a night at work to bring him home. The cabbie was a typical white New Yorker. This man was a regular who would come and pick Steven up and so they were friendly. On the way home, a car cut them off. It was driven by a black man and so the car service driver started to criticize driving habits of "niggers." When they arrived at Steven's home he said, as he paid the man, "You hurt my feelings tonight; you see, my father is a black man." The cabbie fell apart, returned the money, couldn't apologize enough. Maybe the experience was shocking and painful enough to change his attitudes. Like Helen, Steve says "All I do now is pray for the people I hear saying such things."

Passing doesn't get you what you really want and need. In fact, it costs your soul more than you could imagine. And we who live in a society that somehow wants passing only undermines our values and goals, adding to the dismembering of our community.

Jesus came out. They kept asking him who he was and he finally admitted it. I am the Son of God. And he perished. His self-disclosure was too much, too threatening. Jesus did closet his identity and at the appropriate and necessary time came out and he perished. Ours is a world that cannot bear the truth. But Jesus' coming out was to lead us to the Resurrection -- the world of truth.

We gather at this table this morning because we have all come out to ourselves and to God and to each other. After all, the church -- the word itself means he called out. Truth telling is why we are all here. Passing, hiding, distorting are no longer

acceptable ways to live. We are called to live as the free people of God – open, honest and loving. We are not or should not be an ethnocentric community, but rather as the Book of Revelation's account that we are a community of every tribe and race and tongue.

We are not the ones who judge, who sits at the table of the Lord, who worship in Jerusalem or Samaria or who have signs on our church that says – No blacks allowed, only women who know their place, no gays...

If you come to worship God in spirit and in truth then you are welcome. These elements of bread and wine are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Untouchables

February 13, 2000

As we go through the Gospel of Mark this season, we are confronted with a number of stories that deal with the issues of power, authority and healing.

Leprosy is a feared disease in Naman's day as well as in Jesus' day. The Sunday School children played this one well and they thought of the baptism font as an application. Leprosy was a catch-all phrase for all sorts of skin diseases but it included the one which is fatal, Hansen's disease. Today there are medications. The film City of Joy shows the life of lepers in Calcutta, India.

Disease is isolating because we fear it is contagious, or we don't want to be reminded of how vulnerable we are. One of my clients broke his foot so he was on crutches. He attended a big Manhattan church, but when he entered the usher told him to put his crutches on the floor because they were on television. How insulting. My client reasoned what if he were permanently disabled or challenged and needed the crutches all the time – how welcome would he feel in church? Now some of the isolation was precautionary like a quarantine. But the religious leaders in Jesus' day considered the ill or maimed cursed by God; there was sin connected to the disease, sin was the root cause and so the individual paid the price. You remember the question the disciples asked Jesus in John 9 about the reason for the blind man's state: "Who sinned – this man or his parents?" Jesus responded "Neither the man nor his parents sinned." It is not that easy; it is not that linear to fix cause of blame. But in all things there is the opportunity for the glory of God to be revealed.

Leprosy was a horrible disease. The virus killed the nerves so that a person didn't feel pain. If you got a cut or an infection set in, the person didn't realize it. The infection would kill off the cells until that part of the body died (like a finger or toe) and fell off. Severe deformity occurs as the disease progresses. People feared it was caught by touching so lepers were forbidden to socialize. You had to live in a ghetto of the lepers. If you came into town you had to cry out "LEPER" so people could flee out of your way. Ghettos are ways of containing what is considered undesirable.

There were Jewish ghettos in Warsaw, Poland and black ghettos in the United States. We treat people the same way. If a person has a serious illness, like cancer, many avoid the person. Today, of course, AIDS is the leprosy of this generation. I have buried at least six people who died of AIDS or AIDS-related causes and I know others who now live with it because new medicines are helping. But there is a feeling, the sense of being the outsider, the unclean, which has been communicated to them. They feel like the plague. But some of the bravest and deepest stories I could share are about these brave people. One man who is still alive can say that if it hadn't been for AIDS he could not have matured, grown and found his emotional and spiritual health. The illness propelled him onto the fast track in personal growth. He is the most honest man I ever met. When we avoid the sick we are often missing out on those who have learned the lessons and secrets about life.

We often avoid people who are victims of misfortune because we are superstitious and feel their bad luck will be contagious. We avoid those who have lost jobs, gotten divorced or had an emotional breakdown. These misfortunes touch off a fear in us about our own vulnerability. To avoid the issue, we avoid the people.

But notice how Jesus reacts. The leper literally puts himself in Jesus' face. You can make me clean. Here is a person who has not let his circumstances destroy his sense of worth. He still believes he has a place before God, to be made well. He doesn't back off and cry leper. He says, "You can help me – if you will." He also knew that God doesn't always heal and so he had to be ready for that option – if you will. But Jesus' response is amazing – Jesus touches the untouchables. The one whom everyone shunned, Jesus touches.

In India there was a class or cast called 'the Untouchables'. They were the out cast or without a cast and were the lowest level of poverty. The other classes in society avoided them – no touching or talking to. They were only good enough to do the lowest jobs – the laundry and trash collecting. They were outcasts due to bad Karma, meaning in their previous life they had done wrong, so coming back in this cast was their curse. The only way out was to be good and obedient in the cast to which you were born, and then move up in the next life. This is why in Hinduism, at least in previous generations, little help was extended to the poor people. Everyone was working out their destiny in their cast and they cannot be saved from it. Today things have changed. Officially there are no casts and prejudice expressed to the outcast is punishable by law. But to be an untouchable is to be abandoned and to lose hope. They have done experiments and noticed how newborns survive and thrive or die according to how much touching they receive. During the war (World War II), when there weren't enough nurses and personnel in general in Russia, babies were propped up with a bottle but with little or no human contact. These babies withered and even died. Touching and caressing is necessary for human survival and for the socialization of a human being.

Jesus touches the one who was outcast, the one everyone fears. Jesus touches. Lepers were not the only untouchables. The poor, gentiles, the ignorant were considered ritually unclean and avoided by the religious. They felt to avoid was the way to stay free of sin and remain right with God.

But Jesus touched and healed. The untouchables (the unclean, the sick) are asked to believe wholeness is possible. They are asked to believe in their own worth and dignity before God. They are asked to overcome all the public rejection and rise to a higher level of awareness. This takes a lot of strength – “Lord, I believe you can heal me – if you will.” This is how to become a disciple – Step out and step up and tell Jesus YES.

Next we are asked as disciples to reach out to the untouchables, to welcome in those who are outsiders and include them in the Church of Christ. Jesus always touched the outcasts and they followed him. This inclusiveness on Jesus’ part is what set him apart from his class-conscious society. In those early years, the church was made up of the lower classes and so it was scorned by the leaders of the day. Eventually what gives the church power was the power it had to break down class differences. Only after the State (Rome) was converted did Christianity succumb to systems of class and power. Before Rome fell and the city was plagued with the ruins of war and disease, many of the upper class women who were Christians went into the streets to nurse the poor who were dying. This nursing care increased the population of Christians because some people got well and converted.

In the 13th century a woman born out of wedlock to a French noble was able to marry well. But her husband and son died so she decided to serve God. She met St.

Vincent De Paul, a priest who became her spiritual advisor. We have their correspondence. She took it upon herself and her female following to find homes for all the orphans of Paris. She and her followers refused to become nuns and live a cloistered life; instead they gave themselves to the outcast. They established an elaborate social service ministry providing for all the orphans of Paris. The children were placed in foster homes and the homes were visited regularly to make sure they were being treated fairly. One continuous result today is seen in the St. Vincent De Paul Society.

In Medieval Europe, the nuns opened the cloisters to those dying of what is now known as syphilis. It was a disease of double scorn because it revealed a sexual sin as well as the thought punishment. But the sisters, disciples of Jesus, welcomed these outcasts and cared for them. Today they would take in AIDS sufferers, like Mother Teresa's ministry, especially in Calcutta; bring the dying in to their hospice so they could die with care and dignity.

Most of us worry so much about looking good, looking prosperous. But God is interested in our being good. If you are a Christian, you have been baptized. God has cleansed you of your sins, your leprosy. It is your turn and opportunity to help others find the same cleansing relief, our turn to extend ourselves to those who are outcasts, untouchables because through you and me Jesus wants to touch them. He cares.

HUC/JIR
PCMH

Thesis Project

Carl Rosenblum
12/99

WORSHIP WORKSHOPS

A series of classes and workshops to enrich our understanding of worship enabling us to participate in a fuller and more meaningful way.

There will be 4 classes offered Sunday morning after coffee hour from 11:30-1PM
The class will be composed of people representing the various interests in the church regarding worship styles.

CLASS DATES: (January 16/23/ 30/ and February 6, 2000.)

Each class will consist of three parts ; the first will be a lecture/discussion, the second will be group process for handling fear of change and resistance and the third part will be practical and provided an opportunity to practice the public reading of scripture and writing prayers as a way to learn to be a worship leader.

Class 1- What is worship and why do we do it?

- Biblical stories and teaching Isaiah 6 , Rev 4-7, the Temple, the Psalms
- Theological understanding
- RCA's(the denomination) teaching from the Directory for Worship

Group time - describe and share one of the more important worship experiences of your life. What made it important? How do you react to what others are saying? How do you feel in a strange worship service? How do you think others feel? How do you feel about them and why?

Practice time- learning to read scripture publicly

Class 2- What is liturgy?

- historic look at what has been done
- cross cultural look at what others do
- what is necessary and what is optional
- what is the place of music and movement in worship
- what is the place of Art including sanctuary furnishings

Group time:

- Regarding the content of liturgy, music, prayers... what are the necessary elements what are enrichments based on your preferences? Who would be at home in your worship service? What are your feelings about changes or experimenting with changes? What makes change difficult? What are the losses you fear and what new things are not so appealing?

Practice time - continue with public reading practice and writing prayers

Class 3- What should and could worship look like at Queens Reformed?

- Open discussion about what has been done in previous years, decades.
- We will look at old bulletins, instructions from the church regulations and hear from peoples experiences. What did worship mean to the people in past years and how did the style of the service meet those needs.

Group time : If we created a worship service that would be appropriate to the present day Queens Reformed Church congregation and neighborhood Who should do it ? What would the service look like?

What is your reaction to what we are doing?

Practice time: continue the practice of reading scripture in public and writing prayers for use in public worship.

Class 4- This last class will be used to review previous class material and to review people's thoughts and feelings upon seeing the liturgical dance group Avodah the previous Tuesday on 2/1/2000.

Group time: How do you feel about creating a special worship service with the intent of pleasing your neighbors as well as God even though it might not reflect all your preferences? Have the class share what they learned about themselves and about others? Have they changed at all? What is positive in the new understanding? What is still difficult to come to accept? How do you plan or hope to make our congregation an inclusive community or do you not think that an important goal?

Practice time : Begin to create a worship service with those who want to do it and with those who want to participate

Class 5 optional : finalizing the new worship service in which people will participate

P.S. On Tuesday February 1 st the class is invited to watch Avodah liturgical dance company practice at HUC under the direction of Dr JoAnne Tucker who will also talk with us about the experience and process of liturgical dance

~~THESS PROJECT~~
Worship Seminar

ORIGINAL ADVERTISEMENT

A series of classes and workshops to enrich our understanding of worship, enabling us to participate in a fuller and more meaningful way is being offered.

There will be 4 classes offered at 11:30 AM Sundays at the church. The series will be the adult educational program for January 16th, 23rd and Feb 6th and 13th. Plan for the classes to run up to 1 pm at the latest. Anyone ages 14 and up will benefit from this seminar. Sign up with Pastor Carl.

Each class will consist of three parts: the first will be a lecture/discussion, the second part will be a discussion of the material and lastly a few minutes will be set aside to practice reading scriptures and writing prayer (part 3 is optional).

The 4 classes will work as a unit so it is best to commit yourself to the whole but you may attend the classes that your schedule permits.

Class 1 – What is worship and why do we do it?

- Biblical stories and teaching Isaiah 6, Rev 4 – 7, the Temple, etc.
- Theological understanding
- RCA teaching from the Book of Order

Worship time –describe and share one of the more important worship experiences of your life.

Class 2- What is liturgy?

- historic look at what has been done
- cross cultural look at what others do
- what is the content of liturgy, what is necessary and what is optional

Worship time – create an ideal worship service with all the necessary elements adding your own special items. We will have the opportunity to practice the public reading of scripture and writing of prayers for public worship use.

Class 3 – What should and could worship be at QRC?

- Open discussion about what has been done in pervious years, decades. We will look at old bulletins, instructions from the church regulations and hear from your experiences. What did worship mean to the people in past years and how did the style of the service meet those needs.

Worship time – create a worship service that would be appropriate to present-day QRC. We will continue with the practice of reading scripture and writing prayers.

Class 4 – We will break into worship team and create a worship service that reflects what we learned.

**Questionnaire Summary
and
Bibliography**

SUMMARY PAGE
QUESTIONNAIRE
TOPIC: "WORSHIP AT ORC"
17 were returned out of a possible 35)

Over the past several months we have experienced some changes in worship sponsored by the Worship committee and Consistory. Your response on this questionnaire will guide us in future planning. Please circle the right number to reflect your view:

Sampler:

1	2	3	4	5
Dislike a lot	Disliked	Neutral	Positive	Very positive

- A. The communion service was changed to be interactive. The congregation participates by reading more of the liturgy. Your response.

1	2	3	4	5
		2	5	9

- B. The grade school children led the worship service in February following the adult style. They read the liturgy and the lessons. Your response.

1	2	3	4	5
		2	6	8

- C. In March the teens led the service reading the lessons, the liturgy and they preached. Their special contribution was the music which was more contemporary in style. Your response.

1	2	3	4	5
	1	1	4	10

- D. In April the adults community led worship including the liturgy, the lessons, a dramatic reading, and the preaching; all blended with the sound of drums and other percussion instruments. Your response.

1	2	3	4	4
(Drums) 1		3	5	8

- E. Does any particular event or moment stand out as extra positive or extra negative?

Very positive - 3 pointed to teen service; 3 to adult; 3 a mixture
 One negative - Drumming

F. The worship committee has made available the opportunity to request your favorite hymns. Have you done so?

Yes 5 No 12

G. What would you like to see occur in our worship services?

Most common response - More and more lively music to add joy. One response asked for more quiet time for meditation.

H. Would you like to participate in worship?

Yes 7

Optional:

I. How long have you been a member of QRC?

Ranged from 3 years to 48 years

J. Name

13 signed their names; 5 were white, 8 non-white

Please place in the offering plate or hand to the pastor.

Thank you.

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