

IT'S TIME TO GO

UNDERGROUND

A FOUR-SESSION SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Jeremiah Enna & Dr. Luke Bobo



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STÖRLING DANCE THEATER'S

UNDERGROUND

Come see why thousands of people have made attending Störling Dance Theater's Underground an annual tradition. This historic movement in American history is an inspiration to every generation. The abolition movement was driven by both spiritual and philosophical motivations to see every person as a child of God with inherent dignity and value. This stunning performance is a beautiful way to remind us of who we were always intended to be.

www.storlingdance.org

SESSION 1:1

WELCOME TO THE GO UNDERGROUND EXPERIENCE

This entire project was inspired by the Underground Railroad story and the history of the slavery abolition movement. Throughout history, mankind has been addicted to enslaving each other. This leaves a trail of destruction in its wake even after the initial victory of ending slavery.

The Abolition Movement in the United States was deeply connected to a branch of the movement that began in the Christian churches of England. In fact, the leaders were in direct communication as much as possible.

The culture of slavery in America was a particularly cruel one compared to other examples in history. This cruelty was not only physical but mental, emotional, and spiritual. Humiliation, family destruction and oppression

were constant tools that worked their evil even after the abolition of slavery.

We are all gathering, because we aim to benefit from this same spirit, to continue the work of weeding out attitudes and practices that are rooted in seeing our fellow man less than the dignified being they were created to be. We also seek to learn more about each other's experience of life and do what we can to make a better life for all in our city. We bring our individual experiences and cultures with us; our fears and concerns, our disappointments and joys, and we share them in order to create a city famous for its hospitality, compassion and community.

Together with leadership from all the influential domains in our city, we believe the answer lies in you. While the popular culture thrives on dividing and conquering, the real power lies in you, your relationships and the life you lead. We know that all people in our city are looking to create a life of hope, filled with opportunities that help each person fully actualize their goals and aspirations. In these booklets, you will read several references to the Christian church, as that is where the Underground Railroad emerged. Of course, other groups of people and individuals were also critical to the network of friends who guided so many to freedom. While freedom will look different in our day, let us all look to emulate those who risked their own lives for their freedom and the freedom of others.



A CONVERSATION BETWEEN:

Jeremiah Enna

Executive Director
of UNDERGROUND



Dr. Luke Bobo

Author and Visiting Professor of
Contemporary Culture at Covenant
Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Jeremiah: Luke, it seems to me that fear has shaped the African American community's culture and attitudes? Am I right?

Luke: That's a great question, Jeremiah. Our past informs our present. Because of our country's past, and sadly the present, many African Americans live with some level of fear. For instance, many African American males are fearful of being racially profiled by white police officers because it appears that some white police officers use their authority and power unjustly. Just think of Walter Scott who was fatally shot in the back as he fled from Michael Slager, the former South Carolina white police officer who shot him. Think about how LAPD officers were cleared of any charges after savagely beating Rodney King. Think about how doctors representing the United States Public Health Services, instead of treating illiterate rural Black men in Macon County, Alabama, with penicillin, rather, denied this treatment to observe the natural progression of untreated syphilis in these men. Mistreatment of African Americans like this has not only made us fearful of whites, but it has also engendered a distrust of whites. Abuse of power like this has forced us to have several "survival" talks with our kids.

Jeremiah: When you make a list like that, it is easier to see it as a pattern, a culture of oppression. And in the scheme of things, this is all recent history. Even so, there are people who do not

participate in racist actions. For them, why can't you see these above examples as individual incidents rather than a collective judgement against 'whites'?

Luke: You are right, Jeremiah. These are individual incidents but I often tell predominantly white audiences that we, African Americans, don't see or interpret individual actions in isolation from a larger narrative of oppression from the first day Africans were brought forcibly to this country. Of course, there are ebbs and flows, highs and lows, but for African Americans, this is a continuation of a narrative that never seems to end.

Jeremiah: And really, isn't that how we all react to pain and fear? It would be silly to tell someone who's been traumatized over and over again, "Relax. Why can't you just let your guard down and expect things to get better?" If I really want my friends and neighbors to refer to us all as Americans, then I should be interested in making sure all feel safe and on the same page. I used to be irritated when I heard the term 'whites' in this context. Then I realized that I was being given an opportunity to replace that old, painful narrative. In my position and as a follower of Jesus, I have a great challenge before me: to bring the Kingdom of God to Earth in an area of great pain and stubborn evil.

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

N E L S O N M A N D E L A

Elizabeth Van Lew & Mary Elizabeth Bowser

Born of a successful hardware store owner who owned slaves, Elizabeth was raised in Richmond, VA, and educated at a Quaker school in Philadelphia. She eagerly adopted the abolitionist perspective, and upon her father's death, Elizabeth and her mother freed all their slaves. Some continued on with the family as paid servants, one of which was Mary Elizabeth Bowser.

Elizabeth took great interest in Mary Bowser, sending her to be educated in the north and funding her to join a missionary community in Liberia, West Africa. Mary returned five years later from Liberia where she joined Elizabeth's effort to undermine the Confederate Army's goal of maintaining the slave trade. Elizabeth had built up a spy network to glean information that could be valuable to the Union Army and Mary became one of her most valuable partners. Elizabeth also worked with her brother, who, when they found out a slave family was being broken up and sold, would go and purchase the entire family, bring them home and then issue legal papers of manumission, setting them free.

Elizabeth was a member of the wealthy elite in Richmond and used her position to gain access to information that would be valuable to the Union Army. Nicknamed 'Crazy Bet', she would even feign mental instability to keep people from taking her too seriously in the community thereby distracting from her abolitionist efforts.

The Van Lew's were social friends with the Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, and his family. In their social interactions, the Jeffersons bemoaned the fact that they struggled having quality help run their household. Elizabeth offered to send her servant, Mary Bowser over to help. After several engagements to serve in the home, Mary was brought on to help full time. Elizabeth and Mary worked together to gain this access, all while planning on using her presence there to gain important information. Elizabeth pretended to be nutty, and Mary acted the simpleton to fit into the prejudices and expectations of the Jefferson family. Her act was so convincing that even when the Confederate President discovered he had a mole for the Union Army in his midst, he never considered it to be Mary. With her cunning demeanor, cover of a servant and rumored photographic memory, Mary would spy on war strategy documents while cleaning a room. She listened to planning meetings while cleaning up the dishes and passed on the information to Elizabeth Van Lew, often in coded form. The Jeffersons never expected Mary to know how to write, let alone be clever enough to communicate in code.

"Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"

A N N E F R A N K

Together, Elizabeth Van Lew and Mary Bowser, along with others in their network, freed slaves and reunited slave families. They also provided vital information to Butler and Grant that helped win the war and end slavery for good.

The Tulsa Massacre

In 1921, the Greenwood District in Tulsa, OK, was one of the wealthiest black communities in the country. Continuously separated from the mainstream market place, the black community adjusted to every obstacle and applied hard work and ingenuity to create an economically stable and thriving community. They had successful business owners, including J.B. Stratford, whose \$2 million dollar fortune included the largest and most luxurious Stratford Hotel in Greenwood. Doctors, lawyers, homemakers and small businesses all worked together to create a culture of success in spite of opposition.

On May 31, 1921, a young black man, Richard Rowland, was charged with assaulting Sarah Page, a young white woman, who was the elevator operator. A few WWI veterans from the black community gathered and assembled at the jail in hopes to prevent the possible lynching of Rowland, just as had happened a year earlier to Roy Belton, a white man killed by mob rule. A growing group from the white community started to gather in front of the police station as well.

It's not clear exactly how it got started, but a gunshot went off and launched a full-on gun fight. The blacks began to run back to their community and were pursued by the white crowd.

What occurred next is nothing short of one of the most

horrific examples of destruction in our history. As people died in the streets in the gun battle, 1-square mile or 35 blocks of the community were destroyed. Specifically, more than 1,000 homes, 35 stores, eight doctors' offices and five motels were burned to the ground. Planes flew overhead and dropped turpentine fire bombs on homes and businesses. 6,000 black people were put under arrest and held for up to a week, many of whom, when released, found themselves homeless.

The case against Richard Rowland was dismissed as Sarah Page did not want to press charges.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

M A R T I N L U T H E R K I N G , J R .

The Go Underground Discussion Questions are designed to open up conversation about various aspects at work in our history and culture. The hope is that these discussions will lead to meaningful discoveries and ideas that successfully address needs in our community.

The first topic of discussion is:

FEAR

Share an experience you had where you experienced great fear?

How did this experience affect you? If it happened repeatedly, how might have further affected you?

How might fear affect a group or community? Explore real examples and speculative ones. Discuss the effect of the Tulsa Massacre on the black community locally, but also, nationally. How might it affect the white community there as well?

Who has the power to heal what fear has damaged?

Do you see any effects of fear in your local community? What can be done to remedy these situations?

NOTES

Hearing about effective effort and strategies in our local community is essential to maintaining an attitude of hope and perseverance. At www.gounderground.org, we will be compiling more examples to help stay in touch with and join efforts that are making a difference.

MADE MEN



MADE MEN is working with clients to advance their education and skill development in order to build stronger foundations for independent and prosperous lives.

MADE MEN, Incorporated, is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization headquartered in Kansas City, Kansas. MADE MEN is the Midwest's most innovative community organization offering a broad spectrum of services to our clients. Our experienced team offers a proven track record of developing and executing strategic, value-added programs that focus on delivering measurable results and increasing resources. We provide creative and synergistic programs that tap into the mindset of those we serve. MADE MEN is a multi-faceted organization with one mission, one vision, and the motto of "Empowering men and women to do great things!"

www.made-men.org

CLEAR TITLE



Clear Title is a title business whose innovative approach has helped clear the way for homes that have been foreclosed on for tax-debt to be repurchased and insured. This overcomes a major obstacle that has caused many neighborhoods to spiral into decay and poverty. Brett Hart, President, continues to innovate new strategies to make a clear path to home ownership and wealth development for those who have been trapped in poverty.

Based in Overland Park, Kansas, Clear Title has become the title company of choice from the Gateway Arch of St. Louis to the Western Slope of

the Rocky Mountains. We take pride in treating each transaction with personal service and attention to detail, and look forward to helping you get to the closing table. Our mission is to create the best possible, most relaxing closing every time. Our network of notaries can close your loan at any time, whether it is in your home, at your office, or anywhere in between. By serving your customers above and beyond, we strive to not be just another real estate title company, but a title partner for life.

www.myclartitle.com



JOIN UniteKC

and DO one good thing!



As you go through this small group discussion series please share your ideas with us at UniteKC! If you are aware of great things happening in our city to overcome the challenges we face, send us photos, videos and stories that we can post and share with the community.



Do One Good Thing

Born out of a conviction to fight evil with good, UNITEKC focuses on taking action that prompts heart transformation, builds community and ultimately leads to racial reconciliation.

The journey starts with:

One step.

One volunteer.

One project.

One relationship.

One article read.

One good thing.

Join UniteKC and find one of our 10 domain groups organized around influential industries in our city. Find peers in your industry and with a shared passion to create a city where everyone thrives.

Go to: www.unitekc.org today!



STEREOTYPES

“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement.” - Book of John

It's that simple, but, at the same time, hard work. In a fast-paced culture, making quick decisions or knee-jerk reactions comes easy. Efficiency and self-preservation can often become the drivers in how we live life. Instead, our lives should be driven from a generous perspective, aiming to treat others as we would like to be treated. Stereotypes can become the default instrument we go to in order to make our life easier, help us feel in control and protect us from having to really think or care.

There are folks intent on evil, but that's not what we're looking at in this booklet. This is a tiny fraction of our world. We're more interested in the concept and effects of stereotypes in our daily life. If the large majority of people in any community are living and making decisions with right judgement, then the trouble makers won't have the influence they are looking for.



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Luke: Jeremiah, I don't think I ever told you this, but my white engineering peers at the University of Kansas, thought three things about me: that I could dance, that I played sports and that I carried a knife.

Jeremiah: What strikes me about that is the obvious lack of relationship, and a laziness to pursue new relationships. I can pretty much guarantee that all those stereotypes came from media rather than personal experience (although there may have been an athletic, knife-wielding dancer out there). It reminds of living in Hollywood in the 80s and how every black actor who found success was forced into the mold of having to do goofy, comedic roles. Thirty years later, it is changing, but only after an aggressive backlash. Besides being deflating, what specific effects have you seen on the African American community resulting from these distorted stereotypes?

Luke: Yes, I agree 100% that relying on stereotype is much easier than doing the hard work of getting to know a person. I would add that these stereotypes are not only fed by the media but also by American history (think of minstrel shows), families (parents either explicitly or implicitly reinforce these stereotypes), and our churches have contributed to the perpetuation of stereotypes. Sadly, these damaging stereotypes have had damning effects on the community. These stereotypes have bred low esteem

in African Americans. (I encourage our readers to research the infamous doll study by Drs. Kenneth Bancroft Clark and Mamie Phipps Clark in the 1940s. In this study, elementary school-aged black children were asked a series of questions. For example, "Pick the prettiest doll." Most of the kids picked the white doll. They were asked to pick the ugly doll. Most chose the black doll. This study was repeated in the mid-2000s with similar results. Google the 2007 video, "A Girl Like Me".) These stereotypes have led some store owners to follow black patrons because the assumption is that the person only intends to steal. Stereotyping African American men has led many white ladies to clutch their purses when in the company of these men. These stereotypes have led some white police officers to profile African American drivers. These stereotypes have forced African American parents to tell their kids to be twice as smart and work twice as hard to overcome the idea that Blacks are unintelligent or lazy. These stereotypes have moved some African Americans to bleach their skin to become white. And as I began, many whites assume Blacks can dance and that Black men can play sports.

Jeremiah: We see how stereotypes are akin to lies. The entire concept of creating an all encompassing judgement on any group of people, either based on a complete fabrication or upon one person's actions, is a sin. It also reminds us of Proverbs 18:17: "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him." If you are someone who even passively hears a stereotype or picks it up through media, imagery, etc., it will stick until it is replaced with the truth. This underscores the significance of speaking the truth about people intentionally and often. And this goes in all directions: protecting people's dignity and value no matter what color they are. We need to keep our radar up to respond when any people group is being stereotyped. As Christians, we should make ourselves

famous for this.

One last question: I think that many people shy away from talking about race, specifically because it feels like participating in a conversation that will inevitably end up dealing with stereotypes. (i.e. “all white people ...” or “all black people ...”.) What do you think the best approach is to having a substantive conversation about racism in our culture?

Luke: The best approach is three-fold. To have a substantive conversation begins simply with remembering the Golden Rule: “Treat others the way I want to be treated.” I need to ask myself, “If the shoe were on the other foot, how would I like to be treated in our society, in our churches, in our neighborhoods or by institutions?” I need to ask, “If the shoe were on the other foot, how would I react to being stereotyped?” Second, to have a substantive conversation about racism begins with listening. I recommend a certain kind of listening—listen to hear and not listen to respond. Listening to hear means to listen with empathy. Ask a person of color to tell you their story, and listen attentively and imagine yourself in their shoes. I am firm believer of this—listening with empathy and listening attentively is an act of love. Third, to have a substantive conversation about racism begins with seeing the other as someone with incredible worth and value because all persons are made in God’s image. Just imagine if we really regarded all persons as made in God’s image, as persons deserving of dignity and honor!

"People of character do the right thing even if no one else does, not because they think it will change the world, but because they refuse to be changed by the world."

M I C H A E L J O S E P H S O N

Frederick Douglass: one-man army against stereotypes

Using stereotypes has long been a tactic used to prepare the public to see people in such a way as to make it acceptable to mistreat and abuse them.

During the era of slavery in America, the situation was no different and all kinds of efforts were made to dehumanize black people by labeling them with dishonorable intentions, low intelligence and fearful qualities. Enter Frederick Douglass: the man who would spend his life fighting those stereotypes.

Born a slave, Frederick taught himself to read and write at a young age. As a young teen, he began to teach other slaves to read and write as well. This brought him unwanted attention from his owners, and he was moved to a plantation whose owner was brutal.

In 1838, he escaped slavery and after travelling through two slave states, made it to freedom in New York at the home of abolitionist, David Ruggles. Once he was established, he sent for Anna Murray, a free black woman he had met. They were married and eventually had five children together. He would go on to be one of the main figures in the fight against slavery, the Underground Railroad movement and the move to establish rights for blacks and women.

Mr. Douglass wrote five books including his most famous, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. He began attending meetings of the abolitionist movement where he eventually met abolitionist and journalist, William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison, the founder of the anti-slavery publication, *The Liberator*, was immediately impressed with Douglass's gift of oration and

encouraged him to pursue a career speaking out against slavery. He even wrote about Douglass in *The Liberator*.

Frederick Douglass traveled extensively through America and even Europe, inspiring people of every status to oppose slavery and treat every person as created in the image of God. A Christian, he also had no problem confronting Christian gatherings with the hypocrisy of worshipping the God of the Bible while at the same time treating those He created in His image with such evil. His speech, *The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro*, was published into a booklet and is often considered one of the most powerful presentations in the abolition movement ever given.

He never rested, eventually establishing the newspaper, *The North Star*. He also continued in his passion for justice and integrity. Together, with a wide variety of groups and individuals, Douglass went on to fight for the rights and dignity of women, and the right for women and blacks to vote. He became so influential in the country

that he became the first U.S. Marshal of the District of Columbia (Washington D.C.) appointed by President Rutherford B. Hayes. As Marshal, Douglass strengthened the presence of black civil servants on minor government positions and was instrumental in the development of Howard University. In 1889, President Benjamin Harrison appointed him U.S. Minister to Haiti.

Throughout it all, Frederick Douglass fought against the tyranny of stereotypes throughout the country. His very presence and his willingness to visit so many cities and towns confronted and belied the stereotypes of his day. He became a symbol and an example to the black community of hope and affirmation.

"The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you choose, what you think, and what you do is who you become."

H E R A C L I T U S

Then & Now

THEN

The concept that 'African people were inferior' was not just a belief harbored in laws that established and protected slavery. There were entire strains of scientific and educational research that supported concepts that approved of seeing the black community as inferior. In fact, decades after slavery was abolished, there were textbooks for public schools that specifically taught that the Caucasian race was superior and the "Negroid" (African blacks) were inferior.

As late as 1914, inspired by Charles Darwin's *Theory of Evolution*, the book, *A Civic Biology Presented in Problems*, by George William Hunter, was included in public school curriculums. It gave inspiration to the idea of viewing humanity in race categories according to the hierarchy of intelligence presented by Darwin. This is one of the sources of the concept that black people were 'closer' to apes and monkeys. This stereotype of the slothful animal was perpetuated way beyond the end of slavery into the 20th Century. With all the challenges, the now freed slaves had to establish themselves in the culture and in society. They had to endure decades of these stereotypes being taught in public schools, even schools they attended.

Cartoons, minstrel shows and newspaper articles were used to propagate these stereotypes. The public continued being indoctrinated in racism which influenced education, public policy and law. Even sermons from the pulpit were shaped by the modern culture and not Biblical guidance.

NOW

A Fraternity Brother's Story

Dr. Bobo's fraternity brother, Bobby, asked for prayer one day. Here is the backstory behind that prayer request. He posted this on his Facebook page (March 2016):

Lord help us all. I solicit your prayers this morning as I prepare to take this rigorous leadership test. Before taking the test, I decided to get some pancakes at Niece's (a restaurant that serves authentic soul food). An older white gentleman was leaving the restaurant and saw me smiling. And without missing a beat, this white gentleman said to me, "You must have just gotten out of jail with that big smile." While this was deflating and demoralizing, I graciously responded to this gentleman, "No sir, I have never been to jail before and do not plan on going." Wanting to have the last word, the older white man said to me, "Well, you just haven't been caught." After that comment, I just decided to let him move on and go about his business and not allow him to steal my joy.

Bobby, a brother pursuing a terminal degree (an EdD), was stereotyped as being a former inmate just because of his skin color.

"God does not stereotype. Each of us is made magnificently unique."

H R I S H I K E S H A G N I H O T R I

The Go Underground Discussion Questions are designed to open up conversation about various aspects at work in our history and culture. The hope is that these discussions will lead to meaningful discoveries and ideas that successfully address needs in our community.

The discussion is about:

STEREOTYPES

Share whether you have ever felt judged based on a stereotype. If you have never experienced this, share if you have been in a situation where you saw stereotyping in play.

In modern culture, statistics are often used to make decisions and assess circumstances. Can you think of an example where statistics gave an accurate picture of reality? An inaccurate picture of reality?

When are you tempted to fall back and use a stereotype rather than doing the hard work of caring for people?

What can you do to combat all destructive stereotypes that invade your community?

NOTES

Hearing about effective effort and strategies in our local community is essential to maintaining an attitude of hope and perseverance. At www.gounderground.org, we will be compiling more examples to help stay in touch with and join efforts that are making a difference.

FREEDOM FIRE



Freedom Fire desires to see God transform lives; specifically the lives of those living in the urban core. We are dedicated to equipping the young people of the inner city to guide their community spiritually, economically and socially. We have a lot of opportunities that are designed to

facilitate sharing the gospel, building relationships, working together for reconciliation, and as a distinguishing element we strive to build bridges between the suburban and urban communities.

www.freedomfire.org

SOPHIC SOLUTIONS



The staff of Sophic Solutions provides many services including change management and organizational solutions and keynote presentations and group facilitation. Additionally, this staff provides diversity, equity and inclusion consultation services. Specifically, Sophic helps "organizations strengthen their understanding around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion." Sophic

has teamed up with the Kauffman Foundation to host two-day seminars taught by faculty from the Racial Equity Institute (racialequityinstitute.com). One of the purposes is to get to the root of the invention of race and issues, like stereotyping, that perpetuate in our culture.

www.sophicsolutionsgroup.com.



"Courage is an inner resolution to go forward despite obstacles; Cowardice is submissive surrender to circumstances. Courage breeds creativity; Cowardice represses fear and is mastered by it. Cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience ask the question, is it right? And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



TRIBALISM

The heroes of the Underground Railroad movement have many things to teach us and inspire in us. One of the things they offer us is to be able to override our individualism and self-centeredness in order to come together for the good of others, to follow God's direction and to do the right thing in the face of adversity.

This session is focused on the concept of tribalism. During our lives, we are constantly being pulled and pushed in different directions. Both good and bad experiences can encourage us to sequester ourselves in groups of like-minded people in order to survive, thrive and make our way. One of the ways that slavery has damaged the country is that it set in motion a deep pattern of dividing citizens according to skin color. This was not only used to continue racist actions, but developed different cultures and divided people groups. The vision of *Go Underground* is to set a new pattern where various cultural backgrounds are appreciated, while at the same time becoming one community with common hopes and goals for each other.





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Jeremiah: Luke, I have been wondering a lot about tribalism and why we gravitate to our tribes, especially in the church world. Where do you think this white/black church divide began and where do we stand with this today?

Luke: Great question. We must go back a long ways. Keep in mind that Blacks could not worship with white Christians. I remember a speaker once said, "Just imagine if whites and African Americans were allowed to worship together; one thing is certain, the preaching of whites would be different today." However, this type of segregation continues today. Many African Americans, while they can worship with whites, opt not to because many African Americans are seeking a refuge. Let me explain. Because the workplace is a difficult place for many African Americans, many African Americans look for a place that is free of white folks. That's where the African American church comes in. And many African Americans will tell you that even if they attend a church that is focused on diversity and inclusion, it is still a church operated and configured by the majority culture so it is like the workplace in many ways. One of the positives of African American tribalism is this: many African Americans have a sense of solidarity such that if something good happens to one of us, we all celebrate. Similarly, when something bad happens to one of us, we feel it.

Jeremiah: Great differences in expression have also developed so that people don't feel comfortable outside of their way of doing Sunday services. This only adds to that which keeps us apart. There

are historic reasons for our distance and current cultural ones. Comfort in both groups is an issue, even if they are coming from different places. How do you imagine that we see these seemingly two tribes become one as God intends?

Luke: Before answering your good question, keep in mind that this comfortability is the result of being forced to worship as a people group. In other words, this is a result of segregation. If you are forced to worship with your own kind for so many years, one of the automatic outcomes is becoming accustomed to your way of doing worship. You asked, "How do you imagine that we see these seemingly two tribes become one as God intends?" The answer is quite easy: the church needs to be what God has called her to be and to do. What has God called the church to do? Move across all boundaries (racial, socioeconomic, etc.) and build relationships. One reason Jesus upset the status quo was because he moved across ethnic and racial boundaries. We are to model Jesus' behavior.

God has uniquely equipped and empowered the church to fight against racial discrimination and injustices in our culture. I read recently, "A church that is not fighting against injustices, is not a church of Jesus Christ." What has God called the church to be? The late Dr. Francis Schaeffer said this, "The church should be an exhibition of supernaturally restored relationships." If there is ever a place where women should be treated respectfully and with dignity, it should be the church; and if there is ever a place where white and African American Christians should have deep and meaningful relationships, it should be the church. Finally, both tribes must be willing to give up something. Whites will need to give up power and control; and Blacks will need to give up some degree of 'comfort'. Admittedly, this will not be easy.

Jeremiah: Explain what you mean by giving up 'comfort' and 'power and control'.

Luke: By comfort, I mean my fellow African Americans must step out of their own church and cultural environments to learn about other environments, share the richness of their heritage and expand the culture of the Body of Christ. This could transform the life of the church in future generations. By giving up power and control, I mean my white brothers and sisters must be willing to look around their 'conference tables' and ask, "who is absent" and "why are they absent"? The white church has the responsibility of being the majority with the most power in many ways. By giving up power and control, I mean the willingness to diligently and intentionally search for and hire qualified, non-white leadership in our churches and Christian non-profits. These additions to the majority culture will expand the culture and expression of the Kingdom of God and show leadership to the watching world. And from this position of unity and strength we can address many of the issues in our world that need a Gospel response.

Jeremiah: I would also add that the African American church has a testimony that carries the Gospel to our world in a way that others cannot. With slavery being the beginning of the African American experience in America, the fact that they have embraced the reality of Jesus Christ as their savior speaks louder than words at the power and truth of Christ. They have seen past the hypocrisy of the slave owning 'Christian' culture, and acknowledged the reality of the God who saves, gives dignity, forgives and renews. The white majority church has the capacity to acknowledge the 'new tribe' that includes and celebrates the broadest spectrum of God's Kingdom. What a great calling!

"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines."

H E N R I N O U W E N

Quindaro

In 1857, Abelard Guthrie was approached to aid in the purchase of land by the Missouri River, to form the Town of Quindaro. Quindaro was Guthrie's wife and a Wyandot Indian, Nancy Quindaro Brown Guthrie. Her name meant 'bundle of sticks', and the town's founders were inspired by this as a metaphor to represent strength in numbers, united against the proslavery forces in Kansas Territory.

The town's newspaper, the *Quindaro Chindowan*, co-edited by abolitionist and suffragist, Clarina Nichols, expressed antislavery sentiments, urged temperance, and predicted Quindaro would one day become a great center of commerce and culture equal to St. Louis or Cincinnati. The newspaper's editorials supporting Free Labor and critical of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, gave the town a reputation as a hotbed of abolitionists and as a station on the Underground Railroad. The town was populated by abolitionists that included many from the Wyandot Indian Tribe who previously owned the land and resided there.

Helping slaves escape was a federal crime, and because of the secret nature of the Underground Railroad there is a lack of written evidence for Quindaro's role in helping slaves escape from Missouri. In her memoirs, however, Clarina Nichols recounted the town's role in a few tales of what she described as "emancipation without proclamation". Oral histories and local lore further support the contention that Quindaro was a way station on the Underground Railroad.

"My cistern – every brick of it rebuilt in the chimney of my late Wyandotte home – played its part in the drama of freedom. One beautiful evening late in October 1861, as twilight was fading from the bluff, a hurried message came to me from our neighbor – Fielding Johnson – 'You must hide Caroline. Fourteen slave hunters are camped on the Park – her master among them.' ... Into this cistern Caroline was lowered with comforters, pillow and chair. A washtub over the trap with the usual appliances of a washroom standing around, completing the hiding."

Quindaro had an antebellum free African American community, and some residents of the town, local farmers and the Wyandot Indians, networked to help slaves escape into Kansas. At times, they confronted slave catchers directly and refused to cooperate in returning runaways to their owners. More often, they secretly and quietly fed, hid and sheltered the escapees on their journey to freedom. The nearby Quindaro-Parkville Ferry is said to have made clandestine night runs, causing the proslavery side to sink it in frustration in 1861. Some of the enslaved people boldly walked across the Missouri River to freedom in Kansas during the unusually cold winter of 1862 when the ice formed a solid sheet.

In 1862, Reverend Eben Blachly and his wife, Jane, began educating free blacks and escaped slaves in Quindaro. After the war, they continued operating one of the first high schools for young black men. With support from the state of Kansas, the community and the A.M.E. Church (African Methodist Episcopalian), a group of men, including Eben Blachly, chartered the Quindaro Freedmen's School.

The college prospered and became Western University in 1881, the earliest college for African Americans west of the Mississippi River and the only one in Kansas. Western University became nationally known as one of the best in the nation, and its music department was renowned as the preeminent training center for black musicians in the Midwest. Nora Douglas Holt (a singer and composer, and the first African American woman to receive a Master's degree in the U.S.), Etta Moten Barnett (a composer, singer, actress and U.S. cultural ambassador to Africa) and Eva Jessye (composer, music director with George Gershwin and Civil Rights activist) were all graduates of Western University. Additionally, Charles Henry Langston (Langston Hughes' grandfather) served as principal of the school.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

A E S O P

A Birth of Tribalism

In Jamestown, VA, during the 17th century, landholders had free laborers, namely African American slaves to work tobacco plantations. However, these landholders often needed more human free labor. To satisfy this need, they sought inmates (debtors, rogues, vagabonds) from jails in Europe and made them indentured servants. These same English indentured servants worked side by side with African American slaves and naturally grew close. Facing cruel masters and horrific work conditions, many of these indentured servants and African American slaves would run away together to seek relief and freedom. However, in March 1660, the Virginia statute, ACT XXII, was enacted. This slavery law indicated that some Africans and their descendants were not servants for life. However, if an indentured servant ran away with a black person who was considered a servant for life, the white servant had to serve additional time to compensate a master (or masters) for his/her absence and for the absence of the black individual. In other words, this law stated that if an English servant was caught and his Negro counterpart was not caught, the English servant would not only be punished for his crime but the runaway Negro's time as well. White indentured servants were de-incentivized to empathize with their African American brothers and sisters. Consequently, a once non-tribal and natural collaboration between blacks and whites was forced legislatively to separate. Tribalism as a wedge was shoved between whites and blacks. Sadly, African Americans' alliance to tribalism deepened in subsequent years.



"No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck."

F R E D E R I C K D O U G L A S S

The Go Underground Discussion Questions are designed to open up conversation about various aspects at work in our history and culture. The hope is that these discussions will lead to meaningful discoveries and ideas that successfully address needs in our community.

The discussion is about:

TRIBALISM

Describe some of the attributes, customs or traditions of your church tribe. Share at least one that you appreciate.

White churches represent the majority church culture in the United States. What are some ways that this majority can use their position to bring racial healing and expand the character of the Body of Christ? How are these ideas different from the past?

What is the role of the black and other minority church cultures? How can they participate and lead a new era of unity and strength for the entire Body of Christ?

Name one thing you admire about church cultures that are unlike your own.

NOTES

Hearing about effective effort and strategies in our local community is essential to maintaining an attitude of hope and perseverance. At www.gounderground.org, we will be compiling more examples to help stay in touch with and join efforts that are making a difference.

COMMUNITIES CREATING OPPORTUNITY



Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO), founded in 1977 in the Kansas City, MO, Blues Hills Neighborhood, is striving to tackle tribalism among other things. This focus is captured in their mission and values. Their mission is to “organize diverse communities and people of faith to realize their power, develop strong leaders, unite partners, and advance solutions to our connected challenges.” And their values are, “dignity, transformation, relationship, justice, faith and action.” Seft Hunter is the current Executive Director. CCO’s initial purpose was to address “redline” and “blockbusting”; however, recent campaigns have been devoted to healthcare access and equity; racial equity and inclusion; violence interruption and prevention; economic dignity; and early childhood education.

www.cco.org.

PASTOR SERVE



Strengthening the Church by Serving Pastors. WHY? Because the Church is God's "Plan A" for transforming peoples' lives through the redemptive power of the Gospel.

We serve pastors by providing coaching, crisis support and consulting. When pastors are healthy and thriving in their private (backstage) lives and their public (front stage) lives, the Church has a much better chance of being the beacon of hope God created Her to be. This perspective excites us

and serves to keep us laser focused on our reason for existence as an organization.

PastorServe, from its inception, has had a focus on supporting and uniting pastors, leaders and congregations from all backgrounds and cultures. Included in the many services they offer are seminars and consulting assistance for churches who are looking to gain a bigger vision of a more diverse culture and church life.

www.pastorserve.net



NEXT STEPS?

Go to www.unitekc.org to find all kinds of resources and curated opportunities to learn about the history of Kansas City and the stories and people who are doing good things in our city.



www.unitekc.org

"After all, what makes any event important, unless by its observation we become better and wiser, and learn 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God'? To those who are possessed of this spirit there is scarcely any book of incident so trifling that does not afford some profit, while to others the experience of ages seems of no use; and even to pour out to them the treasures of wisdom is throwing the jewels of instruction away."

O L A U D A H E Q U I A N O





FAMILY

The family is widely understood to be the bedrock of any stable society. Hundreds of countries around the world have policies and articles in their constitutions that specifically identify the family as the foundational pillar of community and is due protection and support. This is not to be taken lightly. Having a stable home is one of the key indicators of whether a person has a life trajectory of success and health or not.

Breaking up families was one of the most cruel tactics used by slave owners to demoralize and keep control over their slaves. And yet, the desire for one's family is so strong there are even stories of slaves who had made it to freedom returning to be re-enslaved, just to be with their families again. Family matters. Family is worth protecting.

One of the most significant things one can do is to serve others and the greater community, as well as learn what it takes to build healthy relationships in order to have a stable family. It is one of the most challenging and rewarding human endeavors.



A CONVERSATION BETWEEN:

Jeremiah Enna

Executive Director
of UNDERGROUND



Dr. Luke Bobo

Author and Visiting Professor of
Contemporary Culture at Covenant
Theological Seminary, *St. Louis, MO*

Jeremiah: I have been thinking a lot about family. Tell me about yours.

Luke: My brother and I were raised by a single teenage mother for many years until my mother met my stepdad. They married and had three daughters. My biological dad was sometimes in the picture (mostly, when my brother and I visited his parents, my grandparents). The older I get, I realize how vitally important the human family is. When I do pre-marital counseling, I ask the couple to tell me about their families of origin because our families shape us for good and for ill. And I am reminded of something my seminary ethics professor once said, “God has ordained three institutions for the sake of human flourishing: the church, the civil government and the family.”

Jeremiah: Completely agree. Our family on earth is supposed to be the starting ground for learning how to be a successful human. This makes the attacks on the African American family that much more impactful and insidious. Throughout African American history, how has the family been specifically undermined?

Luke: Great question. First, let me say, “If someone does the crime, he or she must do the time.” However, when one out of every three African American males will spend time in the criminal justice, we need to ask, “What is going on”? (Please do

a search on Bryan Stevenson's TED talk.) Yet this harsh reality has undermined the health and structural vitality of the African American family. For instance, I am reading a book entitled *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* and the author says this, "While Black men are associated with being locked up, African American females are being associated with being locked out (or evicted)." Another factor that undermines the African American family is the poor educational system in some cities. And this coupled with this known fact: the 3rd grade reading level is a strong indicator if a person is on a trajectory of going to prison, entering the poverty ranks, or going to college. Here's something that is fascinating: new research in the area of epigenetics suggests: that when a pregnant African American mother experiences microaggressions, discriminatory acts, etc. that her baby in utero will be adversely impacted. In fact, some research suggests that this reality negatively impacts the cardiovascular health of adults. One final illustration will do. I know many people who were helped by the welfare system. Of course, many abuse it; however, there is one unintended consequence that many are unaware of: a female will get more money, and faster, if a man is not in the home. This unintended consequence is undermining the African American family—it is money or a man?

Jeremiah: There are so many factors that it appears overwhelming. The early church was known for how it loved and overcame obstacles. People of all colors struggle, but starting back during slavery to the present day, there has been persistent and ever-changing assault on the black family. I truly believe it is unique. While other people groups arrived in the United States with a strong family ethic that held them together as they established themselves during hard times, the African slaves

were not allowed that benefit. How do you see the Body of Christ uniting to address these issues as one rather than depend on government programs to do the work?

Luke: Let me reiterate something I said earlier: God has ordained three institutions for the sake of human flourishing – the church, civil government and the family. So, we should expect the government to do its fair share but not overly rely on the government. But to your question. God has called us to love Him and to love our neighbor. Some have called this the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40). So, how do we get here? One, the church (and the human family) must be centers of cultivating virtue and chiefly, the virtue of love. This is a call to changing how we do discipleship. We need to impart knowledge but our discipleship programs must include practice. On my Facebook page, I posted this previously, “We are suffering from a virtue deficit in this country. And the church and the family are equipped to change that.” Two, this love will naturally compel us to collaborate with each other for the good of not some, but for all. This love will truly compel us to be our brother’s or sister’s keeper.

Jeremiah: Thank you for that. Your perspective is greatly appreciated and challenging as well. We need a fresh vision of the significance and power of the family and its place in our world. And then we need to prioritize our lives around that.

"If you want to bring happiness to the whole world,
go home and love your family."

M O T H E R T E R E S A

Lewis Hayden:

Piecing together the pieces

Many Black families were destroyed during American slavery. Consider this 1853 autobiographical account of Lewis Hayden:

I belonged to the Rev. Adam Runkin, a Presbyterian minister in Lexington, KY. My mother was of mixed blood—white and Indian. She married my father when he was working in a bagging factory nearby. After a while my father’s owner moved off and took my father with him, which broke up the marriage. She was a very handsome woman. My master kept a large dairy, and she was the milk-woman...a man who belonged to the [Masonic] lodge saw my mother when she was about her work. He made proposals of a base nature to her. When she would have nothing to say to him, he told her that she need not be so independent, for if money could buy her, he would have her. My mother told [her]old mistress and begged that master might not sell her. But he did sell her. My mother had a high spirit being part Indian. She would not consent to live with this man, as he wished; and he sent her to prison, and had her flogged, and punished in various ways, so that at last she began to have crazy turns...She tried to kill herself several times, once with a knife and once by hanging. She had long, straight black hair, but after this it all turned white, like an old person’s. When she had her raving turns she always talked about her children. The jailer told the owner that if he would let her go to her children, perhaps she would get quiet...

At last her owner sold her, for a small sum, to a man named Lackey. While with him she had another husband and several children. After a while this husband either died or was sold, I do not remember which. The man then sold her to another person, named Bryant. My own father's owner now came and lived in the neighborhood of this man and bought my father with him. He had had another wife and family of children where he had been living. He and my mother came together again and finished their days together. My mother almost recovered her mind in her last days.

I never saw anything in Kentucky which made me suppose that ministers or professors of religion considered it any more wrong to separate the families of slaves by sale than to separate any domestic animals.

(See Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, *Slavery in America: From Colonial Times to the Civil War*, p. 245).

"In every conceivable manner, the family is the link to our past, bridge to our future."

A L E X H A L E Y

Today

1 in 3 black men end up in prison

Median wealth of black people - \$17,600

Median wealth of caucasian people - \$171,000

72% of babies are born out of wedlock in black families

67% of black children currently growing up in a home without a father

While these same issues plague every people group, the history of the destruction of the black family has created a pattern of harm to be considered.



The Go Underground Discussion Questions are designed to open up conversation about various aspects at work in our history and culture. The hope is that these discussions will lead to meaningful discoveries and ideas that successfully address needs in our community.

The discussion is about:

FAMILY

Name one of the most important qualities of a healthy family. Why is this important?

If family is so significant to prosperity, both individual and societal, name one good thing we can do in support of our families that would prioritize its importance.

While the problems black culture has faced are also faced by other families, are there unique aspects to black history that have caused inordinate or extreme obstacles?

How can churches live out the call to treat one another as family?

Name one good thing that you can do to have a meaningful impact on this problem.

NOTES

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THE HOPE CENTER



Under the direction of the Executive Director, Marvin Daniels, the vision of the Hope Center, located 2800 E Linwood Blvd. Kansas City, MO 64128, is to provide asset-based programs and opportunities for sustainable growth and development, where children, youth and families can flourish on Kansas City's east side. Their mission statement is to develop healthy communities where the vulnerable can have hope and flourish.

www.hopecenterkc.org.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES



Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas serves families in a wide variety of ways from temporary shelter to job counseling, adoption services to food programs for children who are under-served. They provide support and education so that individuals will have the skills and opportunities to build stronger families and communities. A ministry of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas dispenses love

and hope to our neighbors in need throughout our 21 county service area. We help with immediate survival needs including food, clothing and shelter. More than that, we educate, give guidance and provide resources that will result in long-term change. All services provided are based on need – not religion, race or nationality.

www.catholiccharitiesks.org



You have been given the power to

Do One Good Thing

and do it again

and again

and again...

Visit our website, learn about our new covenant
with Kansas City and discover your place in
bringing unity to our city.

www.unitekc.org

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate."

THE BOOK OF PSALMS



GO UNDERGROUND

Thank you to the creators and artists of Störling Dance Theater who have invested their talents, skills and artistry into creating and performing *Underground* for over a decade in Kansas City and regionally. Many of the senior company and cast members have devoted over ten years and by doing so, have changed the city for the better.



THE CULTURE HOUSE

14808 W. 117th Street
Olathe, KS 66062
www.gounderground.org

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913-393-3141
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STÖRLING
DANCE THEATER

