

Delois Burney Ward Oral History, Interview Three: Transcript



African American Episcopal Historical Collection

Virginia Theological Seminary Archives

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Narrator: Ms. Delois Burney Ward

Interviewer: Dr. Joseph Downing Thompson, Jr.

Location: The Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia

Date of Interview: October 30, 2015

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Abstract:

In this interview, prominent Episcopal laywoman Delois Burney Ward discusses her post-secondary education and career in the fields of Community Services and Mental Health & Development.

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Key:

[] = Note or addition of transcriber, narrator, or interviewer

Time stamps are noted in red and bold for ease of identification and citation.

Processing and Content Notes:

A recording of the interview was sent to a professional transcriptionist who transcribed the conversation using a “light edit” method. This entails the omission of most verbal pauses and false starts. The initial transcript was then sent to the narrator who suggested further revisions, including minor deletions, additions, and substitutions (e.g., giving an individual’s full name and title), for the sake of clarity and accuracy. The interviewer incorporated those revisions, as well as minor revisions of his own. This transcript is thus an acceptable rendition of the recorded interview. However, the audio, as well as the written edits of the narrator, are also available to researchers. The written edits are kept in the collection control file.

Finding Aid: There is a thorough finding aid that includes information about all of the individual interviews in the Delois Burney Ward Oral History, RG A59. It may be found on this page:

<http://www.vts.edu/podium/default.aspx?t=131182>

Access Points:

Ward, Delois Burney, 1937-
African American Episcopalians
Bishop Michael Curry
Black Episcopalians
Blacks -- History
Blacks -- Religion
Children’s Advocacy Committee
Coalition for Human Needs
Episcopal Church
Episcopal Church. Diocese of Washington
Episcopalians -- Biography
Bowens, Eugene
DC Teachers College
Federal City College
Howard University
Interfaith Housing
John F. Kennedy
Kanuga Conference Center
Linking Infant Needs to Community Services (LINCS)
National Commission for Social and Specialized Ministries
National Institute of Mental Health
Steven Ministry

Thompson, Joseph Downing
United Thanks Offering
University of the District of Columbia
Visiting Nurses Association

TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00]

Joseph Thompson: This is Joseph Thompson, Assistant Archivist for the African-American Episcopal Historical Collection, the AAEHC. I am joined here in the Bishop Payne Library by Ms. Delois Burney Ward who is here for her third and concluding interview with the AAEHC. Today's date is October 30, 2015.

In a prior interview you discussed your background as well as your service to the Church of the Atonement in the District of Columbia, to the broader Diocese of Washington and to the Episcopal Church on a national level. Today we intend to focus on your career and community services in mental health. But before we do that, we had talked about the fact that you are here for this weekend, for the installation of Presiding Bishop-Elect Michael Curry [00:01:00] who is your current Bishop as the Bishop of North Carolina. We have talked over the course of our interviews about all of the work that you have done in the Episcopal Church and all of the mentorship that you have provided to different folks in the Episcopal Church in order to make the institution as inclusive as possible to all people. I just wanted to ask you at this very special momentous time, what are your thoughts and feelings?

Delois Ward: Regarding Bishop Curry's election.

Joseph Thompson: Yes regarding Bishop Curry's election.

Delois Ward: They have evolved to a place that they did not start out. He was actually mentioned [00:02:00] as a possible nominee nine years ago and he declined because his youngest daughter was still at home and he felt that the amount of travel that the office requires was not in sync with him parenting his daughter through her teenage years and so he declined to be a nominee. When this election was forming and people were offering names to be considered and his name arose again, I kind of sat back to see if he was going to consent to it because he had been clear nine years ago that this was not his time. So he did consent to it. And [00:03:00] I was more than a little ambivalent about his running, not because I had any questions in my mind about his competency, and his spirituality and his ability to be very responsive to the church's needs. But I brought some baggage into that consideration and that baggage went back to the Right Reverend John Thomas Walker who was my Bishop in the Diocese of Washington. He was a nominee in the election that elected Bishop Browning. I was not at the convention, but in reading the results of the balloting, he led through the first two ballots but the [00:04:00] church was not at a place that is was ready, I feel, to have a Black Presiding Bishop. So after internal caucusing, he was defeated. I was part of the contingent to welcome him home from the general convention and I have never seen a more broken man in my life. My feeling is that he never completely recovered from that rejection.

My fear for Bishop Curry was that I do not want to see another Black man chewed up and spit out. So I was very ambivalent about his running and saying as much if anybody asked me. Then he was elected and I am sure this has gotten back to him but [00:05:00] I was as overjoyed temporarily as

everyone else in the Diocese from North Carolina when he was elected. I said temporarily because like most separation anxiety there are the two sides. One is the absolute joy at his being elected and then the negative of realizing he is not yours anymore. I mean he is going to move into the new office. And so that negative part of that ambivalence has been ameliorated a little bit recently because I have learned that he really is going to stay in Raleigh part time.

Joseph Thompson: Right.

Delois Ward: And his Assistant, the Reverend Michael [00:06:00] Burkhill Hunn's [ph] wife is the Associate at my parish so I was also having problems separating from her. Well she is not going any place so it just turned out to be best of possible worlds that one could receive. So I am very, very pleased the way things have turned out.

Joseph Thompson: Do you feel in any way that this somehow vindicates the work that you have done over the years or sort of fulfills a fulfillment of the work that you have done?

Delois Ward: Joe, I am not sure I would use the term vindicate, but I think the church continues to evolve and to be in a different place than it was twenty years ago when Bishop [00:07:00] Walker ran. More than twenty years because Browning had nine, Griswold had nine and Shore had nine so almost thirty years. I think the church has just evolved so much farther and we are just in a different place to the degree that I have been active and working I would like to think that I and others may have contributed to that evolution.

Joseph Thompson: Wonderful, thank you for sharing on that.

Delois Ward: Sure.

Joseph Thompson: It was not planned, but I thought I could not miss the opportunity.

Delois Ward: Well we have to stay current.

Joseph Thompson: Yeah.

Delois Ward: As I recall at an early interview the current topic was *Nelson Mandela*.

Joseph Thompson: Right.

Delois Ward: And so we have to not live in the past.

Joseph Thompson: Exactly. [00:08:00] well then let us shift our focus back to you then and to your career and we will begin with your post-secondary education, which is a topic that we discussed somewhat in prior interviews. But would you please give us for the record an overview of your educational pathway after you completed high school.

Delois Ward: Yes. I would just like to first of all thank you for these questions because it was so helpful in organizing my thoughts because some of this goes back a few years.

Joseph Thompson: I had to do it.

Delois Ward: The first bullet was your first degree was in nursing, I wanted to correct that, it was a certificate.

Joseph Thompson: Oh, okay, alright.

Delois Ward: Not a degree. When I finished high school, my family of origin was [00:09:00] a mom and dad and six children and I was the second of those six in rural North Carolina. What I know now were the most dire of circumstances. At the time of living through it, I am so thankful that I had parents that nurtured emotionally in a way that boggles my mind when I look back on it through my current eyes. Because I never knew how poor I was, they were so protective and provided what their means allowed them to provide. But even in that cocoon, I recognized by the time I finished the twelfth grade, that college was not a possibility, [00:10:00] that there was just no money and I was the second out of six. And as one teacher said - the only student in the bunch - but I knew that college was not a possibility.

Unfortunately, in my eleventh grade in high school, we had a very destructive fire of our home and the house burned down; nothing was saved. My mother and father decided to allow us to live with extended family in the County where they were born, which was about thirty miles away from where we were. My then math teacher, Marjorie Spaulding Jones, came to my mother and said “Miss Bruney [ph], will [00:11:00] you let Delois stay with me rather than having her change schools. I would hate to see her have her academic year disrupted” and mother agreed and I stayed with her. They became an extended family at a different level than my biological family. This was a family of four girls and they had all gone to college and one boy and he had gone to college. So, Marjorie knowing that my mother and father could not send me to college said to me “this summer after high school, work as you can, save whatever money you can.” Work meant working on somebody’s farm in tobacco. I did that, it got to be late August and I realized that I did not have any tuition money, that college was still [00:12:00] a very remote dream. So I actually left North Carolina and went to New Jersey and I lived with an extended family member. I went to Drake Secretarial College in General Square, New Jersey which was a suburb of Newark for a semester. I came home at the end of the semester and ran into Marjorie and she goes “where have you been? I came to get you to take you to school” and I was “what school?” She had actually arranged a work-study scholarship at Livingstone College, which is an AMEZ College in Salisbury, North Carolina, which is where the four Spaulding girls had gone. During my limited [00:13:00] immaturity I decided I was not going to college a semester late, people would think I was too dumb to get through college; I would be late finishing so I was not going to college, I was not going late. In exasperation, Marjorie said to me “alright” she picked up the phone and she called her sister Clarissa who lived in Washington, DC. She was a math teacher in Prince George’s County a suburb of D.C. Her husband was a history teacher in the D.C. public schools so I ended up being shipped to D.C. where I became their live-in maid during the day and went to nursing school at night. So that is how I got to nursing school.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: After finishing [00:14:00] nursing school, I worked at D.C. General Hospital, which is now closed.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: Well part of my nurses training was a practicum placement for twelve months at D.C. General so I was already there and then I got a job there as a pediatric nurse. So even then, children were my preference to work with. So I started working in pediatrics at D.C. General and after about a year, I married my high school sweetheart. We had two children and he was in the military and by the time the kids were in middle school the marriage was pretty rocky. [00:15:00] I decided that I need to think about getting my kids through school as a single parent. That time coincided with when Federal City College was established, a land grant college for the District of Columbia. So I applied and was accepted and started working on my Undergraduate degree. One of the practices FCC had was if you had life experiences you could test out of some of the courses. Well I wanted to prove to myself that I did not need to test out, I wanted absolute credit for every hour I needed for my Bachelors so I did not test out. [00:16:00] I gave myself five years working full time, raising two teenage sons and going to school full time.

Well, at the end of two and a half years, I counted up my credits and realized I was still a freshman. I will never get through in five years at this rate. The average reasonable person would have just readjusted their timeline, not me, not me. So there were semesters that I carried up to twenty-two hours a semester.

Joseph Thompson: Wow.

Delois Ward: Working full time.

Joseph Thompson: Wow that is amazing.

Delois Ward: I actually got my Undergraduate degree in five years.

Joseph Thompson: Wow.

Delois Ward: And came out with a grade point average of 3.5.

Joseph Thompson: Wow.

Delois Ward: So [00:17:00] it was the end of this time I was already doing a little work in the Diocese. I am trying to remember if it was before Bishop Walker was Suffragan or not. Because when we first became Associate he was a Canon at Cathedral but then he became a Suffragan, then he became coadjutor [ph], then he became Diocesan. I am not quite sure where he was in the process. I got my Undergraduate degree he said to me "Okay, now you finished your Undergraduate degree what are you going to do?" At the time of the divorce, which would have been 1973, my kids were thirteen and eleven and the thirteen year old was really [00:18:00] having adjustment issues. So I was talking to Bishop Walker about it and he said "let us put him in private school" and I looked at him and said "have you lost your mind? I am trying to keep a roof over their head and some food on the table and you are talking private school, I cannot afford private school". He said, "not by yourself but together we can". So we applied for them to go to Canterbury, which was an academic high school in the Diocese of Washington actually located in Pomomkey, Maryland started by a church called Christ Church, which has left the Episcopal Church and moved in another direction. But at the time, my [00:19:00] kids went there, they did extremely well, was worth every sacrifice that I made.

Now back to finishing Undergrad and Bishop Walker says “so what are you going to do now?” he had already appointed me to the Resolutions Committee in the Diocese. So I was working on that and I said “well, I would like to go to Grad school but I do not know if I can afford it”. Again, he said “together we can”. So he suggested that I apply for scholarship assistance through UTO. His last recommendation was “and use me for a reference”. I did, they paid my tuition for the three years, I gave myself three years through Grad school, I believe in.

Joseph Thompson: Yeah you_____ [00:20:00] do [laughter].

Delois Ward: So, they paid for that and once I got my Master’s they wrote me a letter and said “Miss Ward are you interested in going for your Terminal Degree?” I thought about it for half a second and I said “I think I need to go to work” I mean full time work and move toward getting the kids through school. That is basically an overview of education, nursing certificate, Undergraduate. Oh by the time I went to Grad school, Federal City College had been incorporated along with DCTC, which is D.C. Teachers College, which was very old, it had been around for a long time preparing teachers. So DCTC [00:21:00] and Federal City College and Washington Tech, Washington Tech was established the same time as FCC.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: FCC was the liberal and Washington Tech was the vocational. So the three of those were combined to become what it is now UDC. So when I went to Grad School I was technically at UDC.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: So my Undergraduate degree says FCC.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: And my Graduate degree says UDC and as I said, the final was just a consolidation.

Joseph Thompson: And did you mention where you received the nursing certificate, I cannot remember whether you said that or not.

Delois Ward: It was Margaret Murray Washington Vocational High School.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: It was actually a part of the D.C. public school system.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: So there was no fee attached [00:22:00] to in terms of tuition, uniforms and books but other than that, it was just a wonderful free career.

Joseph Thompson: What was your major Undergraduate and in Graduate?

Delois Ward: Undergrad was psychology.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: Graduate was clinical/community psychology.

Joseph Thompson: Okay. So you talked about doing some work at D.C. General Hospital as a nurse, were there other places that you worked as a nurse before you...what were some of the other places that you worked at?

Delois Ward: I only worked at D.C. General for about a year and a half and had my son, my oldest son. And did not know when I was discharged from the hospital, which was Walter Reed Army Medical Center, that I was running a low-grade temperature. So they had [00:23:00] made a referral to the visiting nurses of Washington to come see me. I was discharged on a Friday and Saturday about noon, there was a knock on the door. And I went to the door and here is this visiting nurse saying I have a referral to come see you, you had a fever when they discharged you yesterday and we just need to check to make sure you did not have a raging infection or anything going on. So she came in and took my temperature and it was down, did not have it. So in doing the social history she asked me if I worked and I told her yes and where at D.C. General and she said "would you like to have a job where you only work Monday through Friday from nine to five" and I went YES, YES.

Joseph Thompson: [laughing]

Delois Ward: Because I never really adjusted to that twenty-four hour rotation. If I was working nights_____ [00:24:00], which is eleven to seven, when it was time to go to work I wanted to sleep.

Joseph Thompson: Yeah.

Delois Ward: When my son was six months old, I do not know if it was that late, but anyway the nurse that came to see me was Mrs. Ada Henry and her husband was quite well known and prominent at Howard University. When she asked me, wouldn't I like to have steady shifts and Monday through Friday and I went yes in deed and again she said "apply to the Visiting Nurses Association and use me for a reference". I just collect all these references, so I did and they hired me. I worked for about a year and a half and I got pregnant again and I had [00:25:00] had a pretty rocky pregnancy the first time so I decided that I was not going to try to work the second time, I was just going to take it easy until my baby was born. So I did and his birth kind of coincided with my husband coming back from a tour in Germany and being stationed at Fort Hood in Central Texas and we packed up and all went with him there. After three or four years, when my baby was about five, we were back in D.C. and decided that we would like to buy a house. My husband then was a very, very traditional man that believed mothers should stay home and raise their children regardless of how much money he made, mothers should stay home and raise their children. I had done that [00:26:00] for five years but when we decided we would like to buy a house, I mean just reality set in and we are talking late 1960s. He said okay then if you are going back to work, we will just save your check, we will just put your check in the bank and in a few years, we will be ready to buy a house. Well, at the time we made that decision, my yearly salary was thirty-one hundred dollars a year and I got paid once a month and my take home pay was two hundred and sixty-five dollars a month, not a week, a month. So in a few years, we actually bought a house, we bought a house in what is now considered Capitol Hill East of the River for ninety-five thousand that I sold for two hundred fifty thousand.

Joseph Thompson: Wow, yeah.

Delois Ward: Many, [00:27:00] many years later. So after I did not work from the beginning of my pregnancy with my second child until he was old enough to go to Kindergarten. When he went to Kindergarten then I actually went back to work so we bought a house. I continued with the visiting nurses until I was one semester short of my Masters. I had been divorced then by a few years.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: Twelve years as a visiting nurse, two years at D.C. General.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: Nursing work history.

Joseph Thompson: What were some of the aspects of nursing that you liked the most?

Delois Ward: Nine to five.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: Actually [00:28:00] what I learned to appreciate about nursing is that it fosters very healthy livings. You take on and it becomes part of your practices to consider what you are eating; consider activities; consider practices. And so I credit nursing then and now with making wise and healthy decisions. I mean as a psychologist, motives play in but really concrete practices, I really credit nursing for that. You just do not make silly [00:29:00] stupid decisions because you are kind of always know there is a cost for not considering what you are doing and its long term impact. Just a little aside, I have a girlfriend who started nursing school with me; I was nineteen she was twenty-one. So I am now seventy-eight so she is eighty. She is having a lot of difficulty with having been so sedentary all of her life. So her major complaint is her legs are bothering her and the doctors have recently told her – you have to move, you have to exercise, you have to do something to keep the blood and muscles going. So I asked her – I said “Marie can you touch your toes?” she said “from where?” I said “from standing up”. [00:30:00] she said “have you lost your mind”.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: She said “can you touch yours?” I said “yes”.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: She said “but you have been doing this all your life” yep, I have. But I credit nursing with healthy practices. Not that I am saying everything is on target but there is an awareness that your body is what you put in it and how you use it.

Joseph Thompson: How about things that you like the least about nursing or that you disliked about nursing?

Delois Ward: Other than the schedule?

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: Part of one of the things that I was always aware of Joe was that I worked with sick people and I never wanted to bring anything that could be detrimental to my family home. So that was always a concern and [00:31:00] to the degree that I could, I tried to practice that. In nursing, you do wear uniforms and so when I walked in the house it was straight to the bathroom and stripped. Never went in the kitchen with my uniform on or picked up the baby with my uniform on it was always an awareness that this is contaminated so it was pulling that off. So that was one of the few concerns that I had. But when I first started with the visiting nurses, I was what was known as a walking nurse. A walking nurse is someone who travels on public transportation to see their patients. That is the healthiest way to go, just being out in the air all the time. I almost never had a cold, I was just probably the healthiest [00:32:00] then, I was little then, I was not fat then.

Joseph Thompson: You are not fat now.

Delois Ward: I was like a hundred and five to a hundred and ten but just as healthy as I could be. I almost never ever had a complaint with anything so I really liked that, just being out in the open and moving. One of the things that I remember about that period was the election of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and his inauguration. There was a contingent from Fort Meade where my husband was stationed at the time that was going to be in the Inaugural Parade. My husband was going to drive a tank because he was a Sergeant on the tank. So we were going to ride with him, my oldest son and I were going to ride in the tank with him. Well the day before, it started snowing and it snowed [00:33:00] and it snowed and it snowed. I got a call at a client's house, 11:00 AM in the morning from the visiting nurses office saying go home, we have cancelled the rest of your clients, go home. I got on a bus right at the Cathedral Manors, which is right across from the National Zoo at eleven o'clock. I did not get home until 8:00 PM.

Joseph Thompson: Wow.

Delois Ward: That is how treacherous it was. So once I finally got home after stopping to pick up the baby on the way, I said no, no, no, we are going to stay in the house, we are not going so I missed that opportunity, did not do that.

Joseph Thompson: You mentioned the fact that you received some help from the United Thanks Offering was it for your Graduate degree. I was wondering - how did that act of generosity and benevolence [00:34:00] on their part shape your passion for social justice and social ministries of the church if at all?

Delois Ward: Well one of the things that it did is that never does a blue box pass my way that I do not put something in it. I mentioned to clergy persons who have been my clergy at the time that experience of that and almost without a doubt they have said – I am so happy to know someone that they did something for.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: And I did not realize that there was level of maybe doubt. It does for me it created a sense of giving back beyond just making sure I put something in the blue box when it comes [00:35:00] by. But that I feel that the church does have a responsibility, a social responsibility and it

always takes me back to I think it is Luke 4 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon men. He has called me to be responsive to the social needs of others” I am paraphrasing. For me that is the clarion call for those of us who are in social ministry. It comes directly to me as the words that we are those of us who call ourselves Christian to be responsive to. So much of what I will do if I am making a speech or something I go back to that because it is such a clarion call I feel to just respond.

Joseph Thompson: Now, [00:36:00] both your M.A. and your B.A. are in psychological field. What drew you to that initially?

Delois Ward: Age [laughter].

Joseph Thompson: [laughter] Say more, say more.

Delois Ward: When I finished high school, when I finished nursing before I got married I actually went to Howard University for a few minutes, it was so short it is not listed there. When I started Howard, my goal was medicine but after getting married and having babies, I realized that was not a very wise decision. For one as I said I was facing becoming a single parent [00:37:00] and I wanted to be able to get two kids through school. My husband and I were not necessarily on the same page with parental responsibility and getting kids through school. I was not sure I could count on him to pick up a lot of that and as it turned out, that turned out to be true. Expediency said let us get through something that you can finish and become productive as soon as possible. Every aptitude test that I have ever taken indicated that mental health was my field.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: I wanted to be a doctor so I was not paying attention to that.

Joseph Thompson: Right [laughter].

Delois Ward: But, every aptitude I have ever taken I finished much [00:38:00] higher in mental health than any other areas. And Joe to be perfectly honest, I think it is genetic. My mother I think completed the fourth grade, I am not sure my father ever went to school at all. If my mother were alive, she would be 101, so my father was thirteen years older so he would be 114. My mother was the most intuitive person I have ever known in my life. That woman would call me if I was home, minor illness, I am talking bad headache, I am not talking bed, never home more than twelve hours without her calling saying – how are [00:39:00] you? I know you are not well. She had not just me all six of her children, but she had that kind of intuitiveness that was sometimes frightening, it was. I have a brother that lives in suburban Maryland, while I was still here in D.C., had a minor accident, nothing serious but went to the emergency room, called me, I went over to the emergency room and picked him up and took him home. About ten days later, my mom called and said “did Harry get hurt bad in the accident?”. Well I just assumed he talked to her okay. I said no, no, not really bad and so we kept talking for about ten minutes and I said – when did you talk to Harry and she said “I have not talked to Harry in the last month”. [00:40:00] I mean there were times even when she died and my mother died fairly young at fifty-nine, I said Lord do not give me any of that I do not want it, I do not know what to do with it.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter]

Delois Ward: Just do not want to give me any of that I can live without that. But I would say aptitude was an indicator that said to me this is something you can do; you can get finished with and be fairly good at it.

Joseph Thompson: Okay. Now as you made your way into the mental health field, how did your training as a nurse provide valuable to you and caring for the emotional and psychological needs of your patients?

Delois Ward: As I said earlier Joe, once you are a nurse, you pick up habits and practices that really guide [00:41:00] your decisions in terms of how you live your life; how you eat, bathe, exercise, whatever. That was an element that I could pass on to my clients, even in mental health. If I was seeing a mother with a young child and the referral came in because mom had demonstrated a lack of knowledge of what her child's needs were, emotionally. But I get to the home and the baby has a bright red rash on his bottom, well nursing kicked in about what you need to do; the practices of cleaning; of changing diapers; the regularity. So nursing was always integrated [00:42:00] as a part of my relationship and work even in mental health.

Joseph Thompson: So throughout your career in mental health, as we alluded to earlier, you have had a focus on children and on developmental issues. Having worked as an infant development specialist; as a research assistant in Howard University College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics; as a therapist with and ultimately director of LINCOS, Linking Infant Needs to Community Services in Fairfax County, Virginia, so what sparked that emphasis on children, particularly children who are at risk.

Delois Ward: As I was finishing my Master's, I think it was the last semester that I was still with the Visiting Nurses Association, we had an in-service [00:43:00] by a Dr. Patricia Allison, I do not believe I remembered that name.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: Who was the Project Director of a research grant program called The Clinical Infant Development Program. She came to the visiting nurses because she was interested in recruiting participants, mothers and babies that might be interested. The hypothesis of that program was - will early intervention change negative parenting into something more productive. Well, I was fascinated by her descriptions of the program so when she left I followed her to the elevator and I told her briefly, where I was in my educational [00:44:00] pursuit and said I was really very interested in her program. So she told me to call her and get an application and I did and they hired me. Now, my degree was not in developmental psychology, it was clinical/community psychology. Well community psychology is very close to infant mental health. This may be redundant because you probably know better, but when you tell someone that you work in infant mental health, some people think you have a baby with a mental health diagnosis, which is not what infant mental health is. Infant mental health is the environment that produces the baby based on the assumption that if the environment is healthy it will produce a healthy offspring. [00:45:00] So from the very beginning all of my work has been in the area of developmental, not the degree.

So I went to work, you mentioned Howard University but the first five years of research was the National Institute of Mental Health and so after five years with them, I went to Howard in five years. Now with Howard, the hypothesis was to annotate normal growth and development in African-American infant, ten after ten years of research it was on to clinical. And once I was I guess

the Coordinator of LINCS, one of the therapists [00:46:00] that I hired in the program husband was a professor at George Mason and she said “Dee it is almost criminal for you to have all of that research background and not give back”. So I went to Northern Virginia Community College and applied and became an adjunct. That is how I got to Northern Virginia. I did that for seven years in the evening because I could not give up my day job.

But babies even before I finished school, in my thinking both ends of the spectrum - infants and geriatrics – represented the greatest [00:47:00] need. I felt that with infants, you got the best returns because you intervened early and geriatrics you gave people a solace to gracefully exit. So both of those areas were of interest. I did not care so much about the middle, but both ends. So it turned out that the biggest payoff was working with children, it has been a joy.

Joseph Thompson: Well, let us spend a little time on your position at LINCS given that if I have it correct you were there in that position for the longest from 1987 until 2001 having first...

Delois Ward: Actually 1985.

Joseph Thompson: Yeah 1985 as a mental health therapist. [00:48:00]

Delois Ward: Uh-huh.

Joseph Thompson: And the becoming the Director in 1987. Is that right?

Delois Ward: Uh-huh.

Joseph Thompson: What are some of the accomplishments of which you are most proud during your tenure there?

Delois Ward: Jose since you sent me that, I had an experience that blew me out of my chair. I was sitting in my family room with the television on about a month and a half ago and my telephone rang and I looked at the screen of the television and it said – the name and the initial and I went oh hell no, no [laughter].

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: It was the father of a client that I had worked with [00:49:00] when the children were four and two and they are now twenty-one and nineteen.

Joseph Thompson: Wow.

Delois Ward: I am just blown away. How in the world? My mouth is just hanging open. So I picked up the phone and I went - hello - and he went - DEE [loudly].

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: It is you; it is you [loudly]. Well the short of it is his twenty-one year old son was on academic probation at U-Wisconsin and probably going to be put out of school. He remembered my rescuing his son when I worked with them sixteen [00:50:00] years ago. So I listened and he said

“Dee I wondered if you would write a letter that my son might use when he goes in for his discussion with the Dean regarding his probation”.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: I said to him “John, I am happy to write a letter” because it was the kind of case that you never forget. I said “I am happy to write a letter, but it will only cover the period that I knew him, I cannot speak to what is going on with him at twenty-one”. “That is fine Dee, that is fine Dee.” In a nutshell, [00:51:00] the father is what we would consider to be an overachiever academically and vocationally, a rocket scientist by training. Married a Middle Eastern lady who had significant mental health challenges. They got to the LINC'S Program because mom severely, physically abused the little boy, left him bloodied. And the father although he considered parenting a maternal function, intellectually knew he could not stand by and see his child beaten to a pulp.

Joseph Thompson: Right, right.

Delois Ward: The Juvenile and Domestic Court System in Fairfax County [00:52:00] put mom out of the house and made father the custodial parent of this two and four year old. Well, because father was not an on-hands parenting person, I could not get him moved, I just could not move him in his parenting skills and he would give the kids to mom Friday morning and not see them until Tuesday. So the kids just kept going down the toilet in terms of their development. I fought that battle for a year and finally I said to him “Dr. B, this is not working” I said “we have to change this course. So I did a developmental assessment [00:53:00] called the McCarthy Scales of Children Abilities which actually assigns an I.Q. to children five to eight. The kid who was five came out with an I.Q. of sixty-two, which is M.R. So I put my report together for the Juvenile Judge down in Fairfax and as luck would have it, the judge we got that day's docket was not real heavy. He read all seventy-five pages of my report and after he finished, he said “Miss Ward may I ask you a question” and I said “yes sir”. He said “why are you recommending any contact”. Well the answer to that was – I did not know I could away with none [laughter].

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: But, I gave [00:54:00] him a professional answer I said “well the kids have demonstrated the capacity to recover. If they are not overly traumatized doing visitation with mom and an adult supervisor provides that level of security”. The judge said to me “well you are the professional, I will do it your way, I am going to make your recommendation a Court Order”. And he did and at the end of twelve months, I reevaluated this child using the same scale, his I.Q. was one hundred and twenty-eight, superior intillect.

Joseph Thompson: Wow.

Delois Ward: Which is above, and as I had said in the original report where I made the request, that although this child's I.Q. places [00:55:00] him at the mental retardation level, clinically what I am seeing with my eyes and clinically he is not M.R. So, that was the rescue that this father was referring to that happened when his son was five years old.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: So, he asked me, if his son could call me. I said sure, he can call me. He called me a month ago now and I talked to him, he was so impressive Joe. He was articulate unlike some young people you get a lot of slang and trying to follow what they are talking about. [00:56:00] Putting the thoughts together, expressing himself well, was just very impressive. Well, the next day he went to meet the Dean and they kicked him out, which is not surprising you know because the only thing I could say in conclusions on the letter a month ago was – I have given what my experience with this young man and what his response to my intervention was when he was a preschooler. I do not know what his response will be to treatment sixteen years later. Well, dad called me two weeks ago and his son told him I am so pleased that I got to speak to Dee because [00:57:00] I was not in sync with what my history had been. I did not know the trauma, I had blocked out the trauma that I went through as a child and the most positive of that is he is in treatment. So that is one case. I do not know how your time is running.

Joseph Thompson: We have been going for quite an hour, so I think we are good.

Delois Ward: Okay.

Joseph Thompson: You have another one.

Delois Ward: There is another case I would like to tell you about and that is not as traumatic as this one. But this was a young Hispanic mother and I say Hispanic only because of the circumstances, has nothing to do with parenting per se. But, she had a six month old baby and a new boyfriend and the new boyfriend was from Peru and he had some [00:58:00] immigration issues that he had to go back to Peru and get straightened out. And he asked this young mother to accompany him to Peru. She had just met a woman about two weeks earlier and she asked this woman if she would keep her six-month-old baby for two weeks while she went with her then boyfriend, not the father of the baby but then boyfriend to Peru. This new acquaintance said okay. Well she got to Peru and neither one of them had any money to get back so she was gone for thirteen months.

Joseph Thompson: Oh my.

Delois Ward: So she came back, went to the woman's house to get the baby. Well, the friend of two weeks, kept the baby for two weeks and when the two weeks went past and mom did not come and get the baby she called Child Protective Services as she should have and the baby was put in foster care. [00:59:00] The foster mother who had this child had absolutely fallen in love with her and was hoping to adopt her. She had a little biological boy and since this mother had abandoned this child, she knew a little of the history, she wanted to adopt her, then mom comes back. She goes to the woman's house where she left the baby and the woman said "oh I have not had that baby since the two weeks after you left". Then she goes to Foster Services, and pitches a hissy fit and they said to her "you obviously do not know anything about child development, you are going to LINCS".

So she ends up in my office and on the first visit, she was suffering from righteous indignation, [01:00:00] how dare they give my child, don't they know that is my child. Don't you know that child belongs to me, how can you do.... She went on for one hour just ranting and raging I mean just absolutely indignant that they would take her possession and give it away. So at the end of the hour I said to her "we will make an appointment for next week". So the second week she came back and it was like she had put a comma behind week one, she started in again. I thought nope, time, time, time, last week was your week this is mine, this is my week. I heard you now you are going to

hear me. I did some reality testing and said at the time that your child went to foster care [01:01:00] you were not here to care for your baby and the County did more for your baby than you did. Your baby had a place to live, had food to eat, was kept clean and comfy and attended to when she was ill. All of which you were not available to do. I said “now if you can put aside your righteous indignation I will work with you to see if we can get your baby back. But you are not going to get the baby back unless I say so because foster care is waiting on my report. If you want to work with me we can do it.” Okay. To start with, six months old do not have conservation, do not have any memory, she does not know you from Adam, she does not know you. You cannot just run in and grab her and kiss her [01:02:00] because you know she is yours, she does not know who are. So we have to learn, you have to learn how to woo your baby and develop a relationship with your baby”. To cut through all the steps in eight months I recommended a return of that baby to its mother. She did everything and it was so hard I could see her sometimes just sitting there just shaking especially during the period when she was not allowed to touch her unless the baby did the overture. I could just see her sitting on her hands literally doing exactly what she had been told that she could do. So she went from bringing the baby a snack to bringing a bottle of lotion so she could lotion her hands which was a tactile stimulation she could touch her. And to the point that finally at about six months when the baby came [01:03:00] to the playroom she would run to her mother because she was looking for those snacks that mom had brought her. So at eight months I recommended that she got her baby and she got her baby back. In thirty years of doing this work, she is the only one that ever wrote me a thank you note. So there have been some joyous moments and there have been some moments that were not so joyous.

I will never forget a County Attorney and I was at a parental right termination hearing in Juvenile Court and the parents’ rights were terminated due to an inability to care for her 2 year old son. The County Attorney and I were walking to the garage to get our cars and she said “Dee you know it really bothers me when we have to separate children from their [01:04:00] parents”. She said “I just feel so badly about it”. I said to her “you should not”. I said “you and I are only involved because the parents have demonstrated an inability to meet the child’s needs. So we have literally saved those children from certain failure”. I was just listening to this three days ago, this new law “Leave No Child Behind” and how they are going to revamp it. I mean we have had laws going back to 1975 about the best interest of the child but no system ever implements it. It is all about the parents’ rights, it is not really about children and [01:05:00] that is what I fought for for thirty years. One of the pointers that you mentioned made me think of this. If there is something that I really feel good about, working in Fairfax County, is almost single-handedly to raise the level of consciousness of child welfare across the county because every client, seventy-five percent of the clients that I work with had service from substance abuse Social Service, Preschool Age Service, Courts, Mental Health and Mental Retardation. So just to raise their level, I will never forget the day a Judge said to me “Miss Ward would you do an in-service for our County Attorneys?”. That is what [01:06:00] I think was almost as important as the individual clients is to have the consciousness of all County providers raised, have a heightened awareness of child developments and needs.

Joseph Thompson: I just want to mention if you see me glancing down at the machine it is because I am looking at the battery level not so much the time. So we are good as far as I am concerned.

Delois Ward: Okay.

Joseph Thompson: If I have a problem with the battery then we will work on that, I will have to get the adapter. Looking back over your time at LINCOS I wonder if you have any

general observations about the spirituality and/or religiosity of the children and families with whom you work?

Delois Ward: Not directly [01:07:00] because just working for the County you cannot be actively evangelizing, okay. Less directly yes because I have never worked with a client that I did not see Jesus in those clients. To treat them in such a way that they were deserving and important. And my focus to treat them with all levels of respect even, this is going back, way, way, way back. I had a client, this is one of the research programs, who was a paranoid schizophrenic and we think the husband was too, but [01:08:00] he was not a client so we did not do enough testing to necessarily document it, but we knew mom was a paranoid schizophrenic. They had three children, pre-teen and teens and they had done such a lousy job with them that those three children were all in the system placements. So they decided to replace them, so they had three babies [laughter], they had three new babies [laughter]. “So we screwed up on that so we were going to start over.”

Joseph Thompson: Oh my goodness.

Delois Ward: Each time mom was pregnant, she would stop taking her antipsychotic medication and therefore she would decompensated and when she was decompensated, she is just out of touch with reality. So the second baby they had she was decompensated when she had him and she stopped feeding him and the baby lost weight which is called Failure to Thrive [01:09:00] and so we called the system and the system picked him up and put him in foster care. She said to me “Miss Ward, you told me you could not make me take that medicine”. I said “I cannot, I cannot make you take your medicine”. “But you took my baby.” I said “well there is a reason for that”. “You told me you could not make me take that medicine.” I said “no I cannot I said when you do not take your medicine you do not feed your son and when you do not feed your son he loses weight and begins to regress.” “But you told me you could not make me take no medicine.” And I said “I cannot but I also cannot let you kill your son”. So it is sometimes hard to reach them where they are. And with that baby [01:10:00] we would send a car out and pick that baby up at foster care, bring him to our office to the therapeutic nursery, pick up mom, bring her to the therapeutic nursery with the baby. And until she had been on her medicine for a few weeks, she would just sit there and rock while I was down on the floor stimulating the baby developmentally. After two weeks, I was down on the floor with the baby and I happened to look up and she was looking over my arm at the baby. So I got up and I took the baby and put the baby in her arms and the baby is now a month and a half old, She cuddled the baby, she unwrapped it and counted the fingers and the toes, which most of us do when they are born. But until she had enough medicine to be [01:11:00] compensated again, she was just totally detached.

So I was doing the developmental work with the baby on the floor and there was a Ph.D. psychologist doing observation. So after the session she came to my office, the psychologist. She said “Dee” as she came in and she closed the door and she sat down and said “can I talk to you” and I said “sure”. She said “how did you know that was the moment to give her the baby? How did you know she was going to respond?” The Master’s level therapist did the hands on, the Ph.D. levels wrote the books, now our names are on the books, but we did the hands on. So the Ph.D.’s always wanted to get it – how did you know [01:12:00], how did you know, how did you know so they could make the books believable. Though my colleague said they do not have enough sense to find themselves off George Palmer Highway.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: So I knew what the psychologist was doing, she wanted to fully understand what the signs of readiness was and I said she had not shown an interest before the psychologist, I mean she just sat there and rocked and self-consolated. But finally, she had enough medication in her that she was compensated again. I really responded to her interest, I was really responding to her medication but I understand pharmacological that it was the medication that allowed her to show the interest. It is just hard to sometimes do what the case indicates needs to be done.

Joseph Thompson: Okay. Well continuing on the issue of spirituality and religion [01:13:00] but kind of coming at it from another angle, there is clearly a connection between your career and child services and the service that you have done to the church. In one way, you just mentioned it by talking about seeking or seeing Christ in all of the clients that you had. Maybe that is one way that your own spirituality affected what you were doing professionally. But what if some of the ways that maybe your professional work influenced what you were doing in the church if any.

Delois Ward: At one point Joe, it was really just completely integrated. I served on something called Children's Advocacy Committee out [01:14:00] of now it is TEC, back then it was ECUSE. You will see that I made those changes on here, it is The Episcopal Church, it used to be The Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. But anyway, on Children's Advocacy Committee, we sought to train folks to interact with the children in their parishes and we develop material for children's Sabbath. And one of these is a presentation on the children's Sabbath.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: So you can look at it. That was really an integration and on the National Commission for Social and Specialized Ministries, and the Coalition for Human Needs, my serving [01:15:00] on those two bodies was because of my professional work. I was what they used to refer to as a FOFA [ph] Female Black Socially Active I forget the fourth one but it was because of my involvement and social ministries, in my case children, because the committee sought to have intentional diversity on them. During that period of time, there was really a beautiful integration between bringing what I did nine to five, five days a week to my serving on the bodies that I was serving on.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: That still continues today. I serve [01:16:00] on something at Christ Church Raleigh called Steven Ministry, no children involved but, are you familiar with Steven Ministry?

Joseph Thompson: Uh-huh.

Delois Ward: Okay. So my last client, care receiver is what they called it not clients because they make sure you know you are not counselling. But that was resolved and the relationship ended and I thought this is a good time to have a sabbatical, I mean I have been at this for six years or so. I told the leader, I come to the meetings every two weeks because we have group supervision, I said and I do not really having anything to contribute so I think I am going to take some time off. I took some time off and every Sunday I go to church and I would see one of the three leaders – we miss you, we miss you, we miss you. So I finally said about a month and a half ago, okay I finished my sabbatical I will be [01:17:00] back. So I have a new care receiver I have not seen her yet, we have talked but I have not seen her yet. And so someone said to me, Ginny is so glad you are back. Ginny

is the Associate for Pastoral Care at Raleigh. So I said “well why is Ginny so glad I am back?” “Because they did not have anybody to take care of this particular care receiver.” And I said “why didn’t she take care of this one” and yet they tell you you are not counselling and although that is not quite what I am doing, it is the awareness, it is the awareness that comes through it.

Joseph Thompson: So along these same lines you have delivered some presentations about spirituality in young children particularly one that I noticed was 2002 at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Annandale, Virginia. So would you say [01:18:00] a little bit about, I do not expect you to give me the whole presentation but it is kind of the overall theme of what you say in a presentation like that.

Delois Ward: The overall theme is – developmental. One of the things that has just been pivotal in everything that I have done as a developmental psychologist is based on understanding child development. When I was working, what I focus on was the deviations from the norm. In looking at the development of spirituality in young children, it is a matter of matching the spirituality with the child’s capacity to grasp what you are talking about or what you are trying [01:19:00] to impart. For example if you are talking about a child that is two or under, you are approaching that child’s spirituality cognitively because the child does not yet have cognition. You cannot explain to the child who God is and you need to follow up. You are approaching it environmentally so you are going to take that child to church, you are going to make sure the child gets Baptized, you are going to say prayers at home, you are going to include spirituality in the child’s environment. And so as the developmental plateaus increase and become more complex what you offer to the child’s spiritual development can become more complex.

One of the things that happened in that presentation at St. Barnabas that [01:20:00] I will probably always remember - when I went through the stages of development and related it to the stages of spiritual development, there was one woman that hung back as people were leaving. People would come up and say I enjoyed that, I enjoyed that. So she came over and she was crying, I mean tears, you know. And as so often happens it is not so much what I say as how it could mix with who she is. What she said to me was “I never realized before today [01:21:00] why I do not force my children to go to church”. She said “I was forced and I hated it.” She said “and I realized tonight that it was because I did not grasp what was being offered because it was so out of sync with where I was.” I wanted to cry, I reached somebody, just to open that kind of understanding it is just gratifying it is gratifying when someone can get that taken in and look at it and integrate it in who they are and what their life is. I mean that was more than if someone had paid me because [01:22:00] I have never charged anybody for that kind of thing. That was just so, that just tapped into what I have tried to do.

Joseph Thompson: So as an expert in the development of children, do you have any thoughts or observations about the way that the Episcopal Church or I will put it as the Episcopal Church you are familiar with, approach the development of spirituality in children.

Delois Ward: I do Joe and it really I think varies from church to church and the churches resources. Whether or not the church is able to bring on as a youth leader someone who [01:23:00] has developmental knowledge as well as formation in the church and can integrate the two I do not know. I mean I sit on the COM (Commission on Ministry). but I do not know how much child development is in the curriculum for ordination. I do not know if it is something one has to seek out on their own but I think to the degree that the church has competent leaders in its field it can impact. Unfortunately, so much of what we do in the church is a response to the churches politics and where

we are and what is of interest. I have been around long enough to see [01:24:00] the church move politically in terms of race to be responsive to children, to be responsive to same sex unions, to be responsive to females as ordained people. So we just go through cycles of how we get to where we get and I think for some it is advocacy in specific areas that impacts that.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: All in all, I would say I think churches in general are more responsive than when I was a child. I was at my home two weeks ago at the church I grew up in AMEZion and [01:25:00] first of all, it is wonderful to see that AMEZ ministers are now seminary trained. There is a seminary in North Carolina called Hood where a lot of Methodist ministers go. It is not what I grew up with it is not the hell and brimstone and who can shout the loudest and who can get the most people up in the middle of the floor. It is a message and content and it is delivered with brevity.

Joseph Thompson: Yeah, how about that.

Delois Ward: I think that at least the Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church, which are the two that I know the most, are certainly more responsive [01:26:00] to children than they were when I was growing up.

Joseph Thompson: So you have been the recipient of several professional awards for example in 2001 you received the recognition for Outstanding Work with Children from the Child Welfare League of America. What were your feelings upon receiving that award or any other award that stands out in your mind?

Delois Ward: All awards come as surprises to me. And I am not being modest, it is just that it was not something I expected and I always wondered – where is this coming from? Who is behind this? It is just like when I received the Dean's Cross, it was like okay so how did Barney do this. It is not that I do not think what I have [01:27:00] done has had an impact and had been significant but that is my responsibility of being a Christian with something to offer. It is not about is somebody going to recognize me for this. It does not make a difference somewhere along the route and if it does I have been paid.

Joseph Thompson: Amen. Well this question perhaps connects to what you were saying earlier about your mother and the fact that in some ways intuition and the psychological field is almost in your genes. But as I was reflecting on you and looking at your resume and knowing what I know about you based on other interviews that we have done, it seems to me that your life story really indicates that you are someone who is concerned with [01:28:00] the whole human person. So you cared for the physical body as a nurse; you cared for the psyche as a mental health professional; you have cared for the soul through your activity in the church and probably those things overlap in those different areas. I was wondering if you think that is a fair assessment where do you think that holistic concern for the whole human person comes from.

Delois Ward: I think this was in Grad school, I do not think I was a nurse, I think it was Grad school [01:29:00] that one of the professors said something made sense to me and that you cannot compartmentalize life. You cannot ignore life. You cannot ignore social and just concentrate on professional. You cannot ignore physical and just concentrate on mental because what you leave by the wayside is going to impact the rest. That kind of integration has been something that I really

have been conscious of and sought to integrate in my life, all of it. Sometimes someone will say to me when I happen [01:30:00] to mention birthday are things like - you are seventy-eight, yep and I will not tell anyone, oh yeah I am tell everybody I am glad for every year that God has given me, absolutely. But I said you know you cannot take yourself too seriously when you have spent your professional life crawling around on the floor with babies who urinate on you; who defecate on you; who vomit on you. You just cannot get too serious about things. I can remember having this client that had a set of twins and one of the twins, this is so sad, but one of the twins had a stroke in-utero before birth.

Joseph Thompson: Oh gosh.

Delois Ward: So [01:31:00] when he was born, he was paralyzed on one side. And as his biological clock said to him, it is time to sit up; it is time to crawl; it is time to pull to stand and he would drag this one side but he would take the other because developmentally that is where he was despite the limitations in the paralyzed side. So one day I was there and I had him on the floor and I was stimulating his physical development and he had diarrhea and it just came all over my clothes I mean it was just all over [laughing]. So his mother said “take them off and give them to me” and she took them to the laundry room and washed [01:32:00] them and dried them for me to put on to leave. I do believe that no one has ever seen on my face a look of disgust or anger, he is a baby, that is a baby’s function and that is the way it is.

Joseph Thompson: Right.

Delois Ward: It is just been my honor to have had the life that I have had both in the church and in the community and as a mother. I have two sons and they are very different, very different. My youngest son is, according to world standards, probably the most successful. [01:33:00] He is a nuclear pharmacist and I never asked him his salary but I am sure it is six figures and he is very generous with his mother. When I turned seventy-five, he gave me for a week a villa in St. Martin’s with four bedrooms and I took five friends and it was wonderful. My other son who is a retired career firefighter I just learned last week that he is waiting for mom to die so he can get his share of the money.

Joseph Thompson: Oh no [laughter].

Delois Ward: [laughter] so it is just different.

Joseph Thompson: Yeah.

Delois Ward: They are just different. His brother told me, I said “you go back and you tell him the next time he mentions it that the money he is waiting on, mom [01:34:00] already pulled it out and bought her a new car and paid cash for it”.

Joseph Thompson: [Laughter]. In wrapping up I will just ask you a question that asks you to look forward a bit, looked at the present and look forward. You had a long career working with children, and you probably saw a lot of changes in society and the church around that area throughout your career. When you look today at the state of how our world is for children and I know this is a huge topic, but what are your thoughts and feelings about the present and the future for the development of young people. And [01:35:00] you can limit that however you need to limit it in terms of area or region or whatever.

Delois Ward: Joe sometimes and I used to hear old folks say – ignorance is bliss.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: But there are so many avenues open to young people today that I did not even dream about when I was at a point of making life decisions. Even with my late start educationally, primarily what was open to us was nursing and teaching and I look at my nieces now who have graduated in the last five years, one an event [01:36:00] planning and one in sports management, it is just marvelous. It is just wonderful to see the horizons open for children. I also think that because of television and more availability for pre-schools that parents are more enlightened then they were when I was younger. When my kids were really young a little more than toddlers, we were in the car one day and there was a radio show on and the announcer was saying that most children are unable to have the real names of body parts [01:37:00] and functions. My children thought – he must be crazy what is he talking about, I know what penis is, I know what vagina is, I know what urinate is.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: That is part of the nursing. When my oldest son was born and my mother came to see her first grandchild, she was appalled that I did not teach him baby talk; oh, he was going to suffer emotionally because I did not teach him baby talk. I said “mom why would I teach him to say ta-ta instead of thank you” I said “that is teaching him something I am going to have to break and replace so why would I do that”.

Joseph Thompson: Right.

Delois Ward: Consequently [01:38:00] both of my kids have wonderful vocabularies. I do not think that many grandmothers today feel that. I realize that for my mother that is a term of endearment but endearment that becomes a weight around the neck, it is too costly. I think that is probably not as prevalent now as it was fifty years ago so thank God for that. You never know where it is coming from; just some of the kid’s shows on television raises the awareness. At Howard Research Program, the focus was to document [01:39:00] what was normal growth and development in African-American children. It was not an intervention program; it was data collecting so that the books could be written on what is normal. But what I discovered that although it was not an intervention program it *is* intervention. Because if I go to see a parent with an eighteen month old and I am asking questions about what the child can do at the eighteen month level as opposed to teaching them to do that, most parents understand if my child is not doing that I need to help them to do that. So it does become intervention.

Joseph Thompson: Sure.

Delois Ward: Although that is not umbrella that it is happening under. If I said – can your child stack blocks, what if he cannot, mom says go out and get some and show [01:40:00] him how to tack them. Children I used to say to Stan who was our Director at National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) program – I am so sorry that we do not have a way to give children credit for their creativity when it is not on the test. I had a little boy who was I believe three and one of the markers for gross motor development was can the child skip [sound]. When I demonstrated, I said can you

skip like this he stood back and he looked at me, now this is a three year old Black, “boys do not skip, girls skip.” [01:41:00]

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: And proceeded not to skip. How do you rate his social development that is going to cost him on the test because he had done this physical feat, again, there is some creativity there. And another two year old that is supposed to be able to stack a six block tower of one inch cubes, well he kept getting four and then he cannot balance them enough to get the last two, they keep falling off. So he gets the four up and I give it to him and he tries and it does not stay so he holds it in his hand. I give him another one, he tries and it does not stay and he puts it in his mouth. He is not_____ [01:42:00] failing in his eyes, he did not did that tower, but he is not failing. He is creative enough to figure out that I have to get rid of that block because she is going to give me another one.

As I said, I wish there was a way that we could score that, we could not score it on the test, you can account for it in the write up of the circumstance of the test you have just done. It has been a really rewarding interesting career. One of the things that happens is folks begin to recognize you as a resource. There was a woman who goes to Christ Church Raleigh which is about three thousand communicants [01:43:00] and there are probably ten African-Americans of the three thousand. Shortly after I arrived, in the first few years, someone discovered that I had been active in the church, bigger church. What was new to me and I had to get used to is so many large churches are not interested in “The Church” not navel gazing per se but not particularly interested in what is going on out there, a lot of wonderful things going on inside but not really integrated in “The Church”. [01:44:00] So they did what they call a spotlight on me and everything was sort of very broad strokes except what I had done in the parishes because that is where the interest is.

Anyway, after that appeared, I got a call one day and I said “hello” “hey homie”. The girl that was calling me grew up four miles from me in a little area called Lake Waccamaw which was a renowned area for [01:45:00] Caucasians, summer residences on the Lake. We could drive through in the car but we never went there. In the last seven years, she has become one of my best friends. And I heard her tell someone fairly recently – Dee and I grew up together, Dee and I grew up in close proximity but we could not be friends because of segregation then but we damn sure making up for it now.

Joseph Thompson: [laughter].

Delois Ward: She has two young grandchildren and I have become her primary sole source to find out when Frances was I guess about eighteen months old, she is now four, mom and dad were concerned that [01:46:00] she had a language delay and she was about eighteen months old. Technically, two and a half is known as the period of language acquisitions. So she is a year before that and they are concerned that she has language delays. I happened to be visiting one day and the kid is right on target. At that age you are looking to see if they are attendant to you, are they babbling, are they pointing no so much what is coming up. By three they could not shut her up and they are saying “thank you Dee, thank you, thank you, thank you” they are running to take the kid to a speech pathologist at eighteen months. Nah leave her alone she is fine, she is fine. That kind of reducing stress for both child and parent, [01:47:00] that is just real helpful and you do that without even thinking about it.

Joseph Thompson: It is in your blood at this point.

Delois Ward: I said to someone once Joe about working with clients. I said “you know intervening with clients is sort of like your mind is an encyclopedia, they will tell you what the challenge is and you push a certain button and out rolls that”. It comes back to normal growth and development and so you are talking to someone who has a two year old and right away you discover that their expectation is as if the child is six. So, normalizing that becomes the goal and in the development, in the intervention [01:48:00] specialists LINCS now someone comes in and the present issue may be – I cannot get this kid to go to bed at night, I keep trying. That is the way we identify the problem, what is it you would like to change? What is not working for you? What would you like to change? Well, the first part of that is to develop a relationship with the primary care provider usually the parent. That takes the longest time because sometimes these parents have never had a relationship with anybody. They do not make appointments, they do not keep them, nobody has ever cared for them, and there has never been any penalty for not being a reciprocal part of a relationship. So as a former colleague said to me, and this has been helpful ever since then. In working with adults [01:49:00] it is important to find out where their development stopped because if their development stopped at attachment which means nobody reliably cared for them, you cannot go on to the other five stages of social development, you have to come back and repair this level. Those are the people that do not keep appointments, we used to call them no-shows and we had an in-service and do not call them, do not call them that non-compliant do not call them that, call them *principled*.

Joseph Thompson: Principled?

Delois Ward: They have a principle as opposed to non-compliant it may be wrong but it is their principle.

Joseph Thompson: Okay.

Delois Ward: As my colleague said and she had a visual that went with this “if you can imagine a brick wall [01:50:00] and the first two layers of bricks are askew like as opposed to being flat, this foundation is not going to hold, it is going to fall. So you have to go back and get those bricks off the top and do that foundation so that it is level and then you can build on it. Because if you put too much weight on this askew it is going to fall.”

Joseph Thompson: Sure.

Delois Ward: If you can figure out where the adults development stopped you literally repair it then as you are intervening with what they want change in the child. To say to this person – shall we meet next Monday at two? Okay. Well, about Thursday, you need to call – you know we are meeting next Monday at two. [01:51:00] Friday you are going to call and say – do you have transportation yet? So you are demonstrating that you care enough about them to make sure that they will follow through. It is a matter of parenting them so they can parent. As your grandmother used to say – you cannot give what you do not have.

Joseph Thompson: Amen to that.

Delois Ward: So you just have to learn how to put it in.

Joseph Thompson: I just want to say that I am so very grateful, first of all for your service to the church, to society, to the children of Alexandria, to the children and the families of Raleigh and just for everything that you have done to care for the needs of so many individuals. And I definitely want to thank you for taking the time to be with [01:52:00] us for these interviews, this third interview. As you said you were a little reluctant at first but I am so glad you accepted the invitation to do it and it has just been wonderful, I have learned so much and I wanted to thank you one last time and wish you all the best.

Delois Ward: You are very welcome Joe. The one regret that I have is about timing. I had a very, very dear friend Eugene Bowens who served with me on the National Commission for Social Specialized Ministries. Professionally he was the Director of Interfaith Housing in Atlanta and in that [01:53:00] capacity, he built I believe it was over two thousand units of affordable housing by building a coalition of churches in Atlanta that came together and raised the funds. He died in 2012 and the last time I saw him he said to me “Dee, I need you to write a book about what we did, we made a difference in this world, we made a difference” and we did. One of the things that he was instrumental in doing was raising the funds to provide a camp experience for inner city Black children [01:54:00] in Atlanta and D.C. in Philadelphia. So Kanuga has kept that going. Period six they have raised enough money that they can bring these children in for this camp experience. When you see, because they take videos, when these kids get there for the first time they are absolutely lost, they are adrift, they have no idea what in the world is going on. At the end of that week, they are standing on those counsellors shoulders jumping in the water and just the most normalized, and attachments in one week that you would not believe. Trust that you would not believe Gene did that almost singlehanded. And when I saw [01:55:00], him at Rob Wright’s Consecration he was just at the end, just at the end. And I still have his last message on my cell phone because I cannot bring myself to delete it. Rob’s Consecration was in October and Gene died after thanksgiving that year and he kept saying “Dee you need to write a book” and this is the closest we are going to get. I often think of him when I think about this process. I say “Gene I did the best I could for you, I did the best I could”.

Joseph Thompson: And I am very glad that we could offer you that alternative.

Delois Ward: And I thank you for your patience and your support and your guidance through the process. [01:56:00]

Joseph Thompson: It has been my pleasure.

Delois Ward: I could not believe I had anything to offer, but with your guidance and leading through, I tried to respond.

Joseph Thompson: Well thank you so much.

Delois Ward: You are very welcome.

Joseph Thompson: And God’s blessings on you.

Delois Ward: Thank you, thank you.