

AAECH Edits in blue

[00:00:00 to 00:00:14] [no audio]

Interviewer: Okay I am recording.

Bishop R. Wright: Right.

Interviewer: Did you enjoy your morning at Ebenezer?

Bishop R. Wright: I did. I have known Raphael now 16 years.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Ever since he came to Atlanta. I came to Atlanta just a few days, a [couple](#) years before he did, about four years before he did. This is the first time I have been invited to preach. I was invited to preach on the Church Anniversary as well as the first day they were back in the Sanctuary.

Interviewer: Wow.

Bishop R. Wright: So to be a preacher, it was fun, I could have gotten up there and said my a,b,c's...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: ...and I would have had a good time. But they were fun, and they know how to help a preacher out, they know how to talk to a preacher, you know.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: All I wanted to get said to them was, I know you Ebenezer, I know you are big and bad, but there is still work to do even for [y'all](#).

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: That is what we try to say. But it was a blast, man. I loved it, my wife loved it, it was fun.

Interviewer: Yeah. I love our old Congregations. The one's that are still vibrant.

Bishop R. Wright: Yes.

Interviewer: I think I may have mentioned to you when I drive up and down 11th street here in the District of Columbia, I am sorely grieved at the empty Houses of Worship. However, and I want to get to this at some point today before it gets to be too late, your letter that I have not been able to get my hands on.

Bishop R. Wright: Do you, have it?

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Interviewer: The letter. No, no. I tried. Your letter that suggests that there are Congregations that need to close and I know you think that it is controversial. Of course it is controversial, but I do not think I disagree with you at all.

Bishop R. Wright: Well that letter got me in so much shit. I am going to look for it, that is the problem with changing computers, over the years and so on.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: That you lose shit. I wrote that at Camp Allen when I was there for something and man, when that went out, Curtright Douglas, I mean people called me everything but a Child of God. But I **was't** wrong though [laughter].

Interviewer: I do not think so, I do not think so either.

Bishop R. Wright: That was the problem, I was not...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: ...I was not **wrong** actually and I understand that it was not easy to hear. I am trying to see if I can find it.

Interviewer: It kind of reminds me of these standards that we hold on to these ideas that we hold on to that are no longer working for us.

Bishop R. Wright: I found it.

Interviewer: Oh, excellent.

Bishop R. Wright: Now, I do not know if this is the draft or whatever so I will just say it to you, take a look at this with a kinder eye.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: But good Lord it even has my...cause I put my email address and my phone number on it [laughter].

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: I was like you can call me if you want to.

Interviewer: You were asking for it.

Bishop R. Wright: I was, that was so stupid. Let's see here, I am going to try to put it right here.

Interviewer: Okay.

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- Bishop R. Wright: I would have never thought I would have found it, my gosh.
- Interviewer: You know I said something the other day, I have, every Saturday morning, I meet via Zoom with a group of guys who, we were all in college at the same time.
- Bishop R. Wright: Yes.
- Interviewer: And lived in this remarkable house that was full of very fine academics and scholars. We did not know what we had at the time, which is so typical of all of us. For two solid semesters our average GPA was 3.8, average.
- Bishop R. Wright: Okay.
- Interviewer: These guys have gone on to become great lawyers, doctors, CEO's I mean Pepsi and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I said something the other day, we were talking about most of them are White, we were talking the other day about school integration and the frustration. I said I think its time to stop being frustrated by it and I think it is time for Black people to reclaim our Black schools.
- Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.
- Interviewer: And stop turning our children over to the care and feeding of people who do not care about them.
- Bishop R. Wright: Yes, that is true because they certainly do not.
- Interviewer: No they do not, no they do not.
- Bishop R. Wright: I sent it to you, you are the first person to ask for this and to have it and I might need to read through that again.
- Interviewer: [Laughter].
- Bishop R. Wright: I might clean it up. But you will see that I basically was saying that we have not fed and watered these things, we have held on too much to our oppressors' ways rather than feeding our people. When we started incorporating all kinds of music, not just the 82 *Hymnal* man, my biggest problem was parking. What I did in the Atlanta market, religious marketplace was there were people who were doing contemporary stuff, but no traditional stuff.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Bishop R. Wright: There were people who were doing and vice versa. But we did five genres and if you do them well, it was amazing the amount of people that you can attract.

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Interviewer: Now when you mean five genres, which are the five?

Bishop R. Wright: Well, there are sort of genres.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: The First Sunday was *82 Hymnal*, smells and bells right down the middle, right. Second Sunday no vestments at all, no procession, no recession starting in place in some ways like Ebenezer with soloists and we called that, it was Second Sunday, we called that, oh good Lord, my gosh. We called that...that was our contemporary, that was our most contemporary expression. People would walk in and get sort of acclimated with the music and then the Liturgy would just begin with music and praise. *And really...* In some ways it was a bit of a bait and switch because it was really sort of *82* with a flourish, you know the *82 Hymnal* with a flourish. Sorry the *79 Prayer Book* with a flourish.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Third Sunday was Mens' Voices, like Moorhouse, blue blazers, red ties.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah. That began to grow with younger men and maybe some of that was specific to Atlanta because a lot of these guys had been Moorhouse men, a lot of these guys had been at the AUC, etcetera. Fourth Sunday was women, sopranos, voices you know beautiful and that choir grew sort of a la Spellman choir.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Then the Fifth Sunday was children and they planned the Liturgy and did everything but Consecrate the Bread.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Wow.

Bishop R. Wright: That was an experiment we ran and it was not easy but boy, when it got going, it was a hot ticket. Our Christmas concert incorporated all of those genres, all of those expressions I should say. It used to sell out Sister's Chapel at Spellman.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: I mean we could not accommodate it at the sanctuary.

Interviewer: You know when we left off the last time, you were just about to talk about that your initial experience at St. Paul's and how it grew 190,000 to 1.2 million.

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Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.

Interviewer: You mentioned using Sister's Chapel at Spellman for the Christmas concert. When you reflect upon on those days, how do you feel...what is your assessment of how it happened? Why it happened? What happened to you?

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah. Well, the genesis of it really was a Rector [gotta](#) to be alert when they walk in the place and try to find where the energy is. Very soon after I had joined as the Rector, they had already scheduled Horace Boyer of Blessed Memory, one of the producers of [LEVAS](#) as you well know. I was really just a spectator at that point, I mean I said words of Welcome and Opening Prayers, but this was their show and I had just sort of tagged along. They had already invited him prior to me being the Rector. I watched him on this not particularly beautiful upright piano that got rolled to the center of the Sanctuary, beat on this thing and sing all kinds of music, not just the 82 *Hymnal* but beyond the old hymns as we would say.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: I watched my people. I watched my people swing and sway and swoon and I said – aha now that is an interesting piece of data. It was lively, it was lively. I thought that I could be a lively preacher next to a musical expression like that. I thought that that would be the formula for rebirth. My bottom line is, and I know this to be true and it still is true, is that if somebody in a Church says something, and if somebody in a Church sings something, then people will show up. That is just the truth and we do not want to look at that because we will have to interrogate if we are actually saying something and how well we are actually singing something. We do not want to interrogate that.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Bishop R. Wright: But when we do and when we raise that bar, I am telling you at least for particularly People of Color and I think this is true universally, people are going to show up because as they say “no one ever left Church humming a sermon.” [Right?](#) So the preacher must dance with the musical expression. It must be a dynamic partnership. That is a delivery system at least in these America's. That is the delivery system for us I would be so bold to say. I was raised by a Church organist; I know what I am talking about when it comes to these things.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: If somebody will stand on the floor and talk to people, about God and God's goodness.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: And somebody will follow up by beating on an organ...

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Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: ...or piano, and singing something from their gut, from their soul people are going to show up. So that was the formula. I watched Horace Boyer; I watched my people react to Horace Boyer. Not long after that, the gentleman who was leading the Men's Choir decided to take another position, Westley Boyd was his name. I thought to myself, here is an opportunity to seize on bringing the change because I did not affect that change, Westley was going in a different direction. So what I did, the bold step I did do was that I asked the then organist to step down.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: That had been the organist for 22 years and he was well, well loved, Dr. Calvin Grimes, many people called him Uncle Calvin, I mean he is a sweet, sweet man, he is now dead. That was probably the most controversial thing I did was to ask him to step down and that was met with some real ranker and upset and I understood that. I will fast forward through all of that. We worked through that and we took them back to their parish profile. They said they wanted their kids in Church, they said they wanted it to be a multi-generational expression on Sunday. I told them that I knew how to do that but this was part of the cost. We were able to make a way. But I hired a guy, now this is an African-American Congregation, I hired a guy who I liked to joke was openly White and openly gay.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: Tray Clegg came to us and on his interview, it was just he and I in the Church, we went to the organ, I put the 82 *Hymnal* in front of him, I said play that and he did wonderfully well. I put the *LEVAS Hymnal* in front of him and I said now play a few of these and he did those wonderfully well. I gave him some contemporary stuff and I said now play this and he played it wonderfully well and I knew at that moment we had the goods. It took folks a little while to really get there because they were really working through their loyalty to our previous configuration and their loyalty to the idea of what an Episcopal Church was supposed to be like. But, they could not help their feet from tapping.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: One of my most staunch critics who sat in the front row, a former Clergy person retired Clergy person, sitting in the front row. I mean literally he was sitting in the front row with his arms crossed, but I could see underneath, but his feet were tapping.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: The upper part of his body said no, but his foot said hell yeah. After a season of that music offered and done well, then the choir began to grow. When I

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finished, that was 18 months in when we got all of that musical stuff resorted, when I finished there were 100 Voice Volunteer Choir.

Interviewer: [Jesus!](#)[chuckles].

Bishop R. Wright: I do not know about you, but boy let me tell you something, if you get to preach behind 100 Voice Choir that is singing something from their spirit man, you know all you have to do is figure out how to ride that wave, accentuate it, amplify it.

Interviewer: Lord plant my feet on higher ground.

Bishop R. Wright: That is all. And there were many a day, I will confess, there were many a day man that I had to get my emotions in control as I went to the Pulpit because these people had stirred up the place. They had stirred up the place. My children, my children remember fondly St. Paul's and the Worship experience that we had there at St. Paul's. It really was extraordinary and so many pieces came together. Then as it grew in notoriety... Ambassador Andrew Young would show up and all these kinds of people, the Mayor would show up and it became... Suzanne Malveaux would show up from CNN. It became a place to be because I like to think that we held together excellence distributed over different kinds of music as well as, I would hope, as well as preaching that had both spiritual and intellectual heft.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: Last thing I will say about that is that I am a city boy, I do not know much about fishing, but I know you have to fish where the fish are. I think that is the first rule of fishing is you have to find out where the fish are. What I realize in Atlanta, and this is true for many cities. There is a large number of Black people here, Black and Brown people in this city who work in an all White context all week, whose children go to school in an all White context all week. Not that there is anything bad about any of that, but I know as an African-American professional, I know my wife is a Jamaican, but we will call her African-American, professional, you want some place with some regularity where you do not have to explain everything.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Where the way that you embody Worship and the way you embody Liturgy and the way you embody Welcome...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: ...is understood and spoke with fluency.

Interviewer: Yeah.

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- Bishop R. Wright: What we realized after putting some of these pieces together, was that we were providing a refuge for world weary folks.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Bishop R. Wright: Not the least of which was me [laughter].
- Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Bishop R. Wright: Then it became, we began to think of ourselves, as not some little parish on the Black side of town.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Bishop R. Wright: But as a place that was offering something to a city.
- Interviewer: What was happening to you? You said you saw it as a refuge as well.
- Bishop R. Wright: Oh yeah. Well, I mean first of all for me personally I think this is how I come to all this music change stuff is that it is music that sustains me. I think about the roughest times in my life it has been singing. Even when I couldn't sing, somebody sang over me or sang around me or thank God for iTunes or whatever it is. It stirs the soul, it strengthens you, it elevates you all those sorts of things. And so, to create a Church with other people, lots of other people where we were fluent in that language, brought a lot of people in, a lot of people in who were just weary. Again as I said I know something about that from leadership and I know something about that from being a husband and from being a parent and all those other things. You needed something; you needed a place. I think about all the things that happened in that Congregational context that were tacit, that were unspoken. You are in a room with people I mean there are JD's, MD's, DD's, Ph.D.'s all over the place. There are people in that room who were classmates of Dr. King and beyond who have caught hell in this America and yet still aspire for excellence. So you draw strength from them just by being in Fellowship with them. Some of the people who started the first Black bank here in Atlanta were parishioners. The mother and family of Hamilton Holmes who had integrated UGA...
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Bishop R. Wright: Charlayne...
- Interviewer: Charlayne Hunter-Gault.
- Bishop R. Wright: Yeah, she was in the Congregation, Isabella Holmes, a beautiful royal woman.
- Interviewer: With Vernon Jordan behind her.

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Bishop R. Wright: Exactly. These people were not people that know about in February, these were parishioners. Any Priest that is honest will tell you that it is the royal lay people of your Congregation that leave an important impression on you. You start to learn something about the pastoral task as these people share out their lives with you, their ups, downs, struggles. I remember the first time I ever got any kind of significant gift to my discretionary fund as a Rector which was pretty much anemic previously was from Isabella Holmes, Hamilton Holmes mother.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: She had sold some family property over in Alabama and she wanted to make sure her Priest had everything he needed to do the things he needed to do. I was just so moved by her fidelity to generosity and to this notion of sharing. I mean it moves you, it grows you is what I want to say. It grows you.

Interviewer: You still, have it?

Bishop R. Wright: Still have what?

Interviewer: Do we still have those, what did you call them, the royalty?

Bishop R. Wright: We do, we have less of them, we have less of them. Who had a gravitas, we have less of them?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: They have gone on to glory and we are not the same as them. [They...](#) It was that group who suffered so that you and I could have the conveniences that we have.

Interviewer: Correct.

Bishop R. Wright: Prosperity, financial prosperity came to some of them and their financial prosperity was marked by those other years. There is another gentleman who joined the Congregation. He left one Congregation to come to St. Paul's and he was one of those Maynard Jackson millionaires. When Maynard Jackson became the first African-American...

Interviewer: Yep.

Bishop R. Wright: ...Mayor of Atlanta...

Interviewer: Yep.

Bishop R. Wright: ...Maynard Jackson insisted that contracts be distributed equally even over Black contractors and some Black contractors who were standing ready to help to build the airport, previously shut out because of their race were now invited in to a new level of achievement, accomplishment and prosperity.

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Interviewer: Yeah, they took them to the Supreme Court.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: We had some of them in the Congregation and to see the lavish lifestyles that they were able to achieve through hard work, but to always see that tempered by the fact that they had come from really modest means and that they had come through struggle.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: It was not American history at a distance to them, these were people that they knew. We had one guy who was a Tuskegee Airman in the Congregation. I mean... I could get lost in all of that, but I guess what I want to try to say to you is that my pastoral learning journey was shaped by those folks. As I went on, I realized how much that I wanted to be, you want to make them proud because they have made you proud, that there was a transaction there. So we just try to live that out in every aspect of what we were doing. That is why the bar had to be at a certain level because we were so and so's Pastor or so and so's Church. Not in some sort of sady, you know sady sort of precious way...

Interviewer: I got you.

Bishop R. Wright: ...cause folks were deserving of the best because they had given America and the Church the best. Really, that really left a mark on me. Even as I became Bishop, I was proud to make them proud that their Rector had become the first African-American Bishop of Atlanta.

Interviewer: You sound as if you were lifted by it. I can feel that as you talk about it.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah, there is no doubt about it. Maybe I am particularly weird which is probably true too, in that my first degree is in history. I went to Howard University and I studied history. It has always been a natural sort of thing for me to look back and appreciate and to see these stories. When these stories are sitting next to you or sitting across a table from you, I bring a particular respect to that. To be able to call Andy Young or some of these other folks, Felker Ward, Isabella Holmes, Gladys Richardson. To call of these people who made history and they pick up the phone [laughter] and want to chat with you and want to pour into you. I guess what if I wanted to zoom out, I guess what I would want to say is that what added to the dynamism of Worship was the dynamism of Fellowship. There was intergenerational Fellowship. I think one of the things you say you drive up streets in Washington and you see shuttered Houses of Worship that were previously vibrant places, my Sunday school when I left was as big as the Congregation was when I found the whole Congregation. [Right?](#)

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Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: To see some of the older people absolutely beam when it was Youth Sunday and one of the little ones would preach or one of the little ones would do a solo or when we had the play or we had the this or that. You really see the dynamism. What is the wonderful line in Scripture “the young ones will dream dreams and the old ones will see visions” I probably have that reversed. But when you start to see that interconnectedness, I mean my kids looked around and they knew that that was Dr. Hadley or this was Dr. Jackson or Dr. So and so. These were the people who were hugging them and giving them peppermint candy. I really, as you can hear respect in my voice, but you hear lament too because those days are fleeting. For the places that have that still, those days are... maybe numbered.

Interviewer: Oh no, they are numbered and I do not know, I am 73 years old and I see the...

Bishop R. Wright: Are you really?

Interviewer: I am.

Bishop R. Wright: Well Black don't crack, do it?

Interviewer: Black don't crack, but when we go, we go. But dropping off a cliff, that is what I said to my daddy one time he was 75 and I said whoa what happened to you. But anyway...I lament, I have a very good friend two years behind me was at Moorhouse, Ralph Everett. We talk all the time about the departure of the ancestors. What does that do? What does that mean for us? Now I know I am trying to get your oral history but I want to raise this with you because you have raised it so eloquently. One of my best friends in the whole wide world and I never trumpeted it, but it was Vernon Jordan. He would call me up just to say let's have breakfast. When he got sick, his daughter said I need you to come and talk to him. We could come, we could pray together or he would say to me “oh I see now, did you send that letter yet” and I said “yes” and he said “that's too bad” because if you had called me before you sent it, I would have told you now that you have written it, put it in the trash can. You know what I mean? That kind of wisdom. What are we going to do? I am the last generation with the living memory of Segregation in America.

Bishop R. Wright: Yes.

Interviewer: What does the require of me?

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.

Interviewer: We need to bear witness.

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Bishop R. Wright: Well we could take any number of off ramps here. As I mentioned at Ebenezer, especially when we live in a world and a state and a nation that is trying to legislate forgetfulness. My joke is, if you do not want your kids to know you did it you should not have done it.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: They do not want to remember grandma standing there at the foot of that lynched man, while grandpa is the one who is spitting on the little kids trying to go to school.

Interviewer: Yeah, that is right. That is right.

Bishop R. Wright: Or Uncle so and so...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: ...setting buses on fire but they did it.

Interviewer: They did it.

Bishop R. Wright: They damn sure did it.

Interviewer: They did it.

Bishop R. Wright: Then they went to Church on Sunday. They damn sure did it. Now I do not think they have to be delivered to a pit of fire where there is weeping and gnashing, but you damn sure did it and my Bible said if you know the Scriptures, you [abide in](#) them, "The truth will set you free".

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: It is important to you and those beyond you really who can remember those stories because that is a phase of American, I call the complicated American family story.

Interviewer: Isn't it.

Bishop R. Wright: Complicated.

Interviewer: Oh, oh. You know and we are not easy people. We know this. We are not easy people. There are times at St. John's Lafayette Square I look at the Rector when our buddy Karen Hastie Williams died. I looked at him and I said – is this your first time knowing Old Black Washington? He looked at me and he said – yes.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.

Interviewer: Right. I said Old Black Washington is in this room right now.

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Bishop R. Wright: Yeah. Yeah, and that is what I mean, you phrased it that way which I like, but that is what I was saying about those nobles, that royalty. Not all of them are royal, but some are just old. Those people who come out, I remember when I was at St. John the Divine, and when Moran Weston died, I remember I am there, [a little...](#) I was probably still smelling like Alma, I was so new.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: In walks Dick Parsons and in walks Ken Chenault AMEX and AOL respectively. They are sort of talking the way me and you talking right now, two brothers, just interacting, stepping out of the [war](#) for a minute just to chat. The common... to remember the guy who taught them the game, Moran Weston, Carver Savings Bank and all that sort of stuff. Took them on their first dive into high finance, little Black Episcopal Priest. Yeah so, we are removed from those folks. My son gets to see me for whatever that is worth, but he is not in the company of some of those, they call it Striver's Row in New York...

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: ...those Striver's.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: Who in an unprecedented amount of time closed, at least professionally, closed the gap of Jim Crow and segregation and enslavement. Just leapfrogged into the future because of hard work, what I call grit and grace.

Interviewer: Yes, grit and grace.

Bishop R. Wright: Grit and grace, they had it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Anyway, well you better keep us on track here.

Interviewer: I am going to keep; I am going to get right back on track.

Bishop R. Wright: Me and you I think could take a while.

Interviewer: I know this is the problem. Now listen, what happened when... there was a vacancy as Bishop of Atlanta.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did that journey begin with you? And what were some of the factors that led to your answering that call?

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Bishop R. Wright: To be Bishop?

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: I am in year nine at this point, thereabouts, nine and change at St. Paul's. We had bought property, built this big parking lot. We bought two other houses. We moved our offices to a house next door and bought another house for outreach to distribute goods and services to folks. It was all going along and I told you about the Worship - 100 Voice Choir and all this sort of stuff, I mean it was just glorious. I look back and maybe I would have counsel myself to say where are you rushing to. Anyway it was nine years and it had been a heavy and good lift. But then I thought to myself, and I had not looked...I had not entertained any other options that whole way long. I mean I was thoroughly at St. Paul's, thoroughly.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: My kids were growing up there, we were a family there every Sunday just a wonderful, wonderful time in our lives. You know how these things go, I got to about nine and I said – hmm I am either going to double down here and redevelop myself here and figure out some things we need to do going forward. Or I am going to entertain other options. Now at that time our then Bishop, Bishop J. Neill Alexander had just indicated that he had called for the election of the 10th Bishop. Immediately I had started to hear from people about – hey would you think about this. I was never one of those Clergy people who sat around thinking – boy I look good in a purple shirt.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: I have respect for the ministry but I never saw that for myself it looked constraining to me so I wondered about that. As the process went on, and they began to develop a profile and began to solicit names, I had been contacted by a few people. I said...I sort of hem and hawed. I don't know, I am not so sure. Then a gentleman who and I was the Chair of the CoM at that time in the Diocese of Atlanta. A gentleman who had been on a search committee with me on the CoM rather with me was now on the Search Committee.

Interviewer: Commission on Ministry, yes.

Bishop R. Wright: About three days before we were supposed to have all of our paperwork in to be a candidate, the gentleman called me and said – Rob you have been nominated. I said – yeah thank you very much I had heard. He said – but we do not have any of your paperwork in, we have about three days left. What are you thinking? Where are you at? I said – well you know I just do not know; I am not sure it is a good job. I am not sure it is a good thing; I do not know. He said – okay, well I get it, you just want to talk about discernment at the CoM, you do not want to do any.

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Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: He sort of lit my ass on fire about that. I am convicted Lord, I am convicted. What could one do but to follow up with that? I put in my information because I do believe, I do believe that discernment is done in the community.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: I do believe that and I do believe Spirit works through folks.

Interviewer: Right.

Bishop R. Wright: We should not just be waking up on the couch somewhere saying – I is or I ain't...you know. It is we do this in discernment. I mean the rest is history. I put myself forth and we will we will see when the bus stops. Right. As we went along, my energy went up. As that process gave me opportunity to talk about what I thought were important things for the Church, what I thought were urgent. Meanwhile, God is a funny God because God is preparing you all along because I also at that point had done any number of Clergy retreats around other Dioceses. I had been identified as someone who come and bring an encouraging word to folks, etcetera. So I had practice at talking to Clergy and [fielding...](#) handling big rooms and all that sort of stuff. It was sort of a familiar thing for me. I was not necessarily intimidated by the thought of the conversations and even the thought of the walkabouts, once you become a finalist. My philosophy was just telling the truth and then we will see where it goes. We went to North Georgia and South Georgia and they asked me about what I thought about gay and lesbian brothers and sisters and I said – I think they are wonderful and fine and I think that one's orientation does not qualify or disqualify them for Ordained Ministry. What I want to know is – are they Called. That was a big ticket item then and again that was 2012 and Gene... uh... 2003...

Interviewer: Robinson, Robison.

Bishop R. Wright: ...Robinson was only about nine years in the rearview mirror but still it was still tender...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: ...in places. They asked me about guns and I said well I am ex-military and I was qualified in guns but I cannot think of any good reason why a regular citizen needs an AK-47 or, [you know](#), a war grade weapon. I thought for sure saying those two things would disqualify me in a lot of corners. Well we got to the election and I had all of the lay votes on the first ballot.

Interviewer: Wow.

Bishop R. Wright: This is in the middle of North Georgia.

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Interviewer: Wow.

Bishop R. Wright: And had about maybe a little bit more than half of the Clergy votes and then the Clergy started coming to me at that point and then I was elected on the third ballot.

Interviewer: When did the rush... internal rush begin with you?

Bishop R. Wright: The rush, what do you mean by that?

Interviewer: When you realized it was happening.

Bishop R. Wright: Right there. So I was sitting there in the pews and so we had just had Worship all of the Electing Council, we had just had Worship and we voted and it was a little bit of a floating feeling through all of that. My wife was there in the balcony and we were in the Cathedral and the Dean was a Candidate.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Dean Candler. When we got the results, they were read out, my name was last – W is last. So they read them, they read them, they read them and they kept telling everybody what votes were necessary. They said Wright in the Lay Order of course I had already had all of those and then they said in the Clergy Order they said ‘x’ and they said we have an election.

Interviewer: [Gasp].

Bishop R. Wright: I would say that is where I...I felt like the wind had gone out of me a little bit, that is how I felt it, was unusual. I had Clergy sitting around me who put their hands on my shoulder, whatever.

Interviewer: They laid their hands on you.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah, just a sort of steady me or pat me or whatever it was, comfort me, encourage me. Then the President of the Standing Committee walked down and said – you have been elected, will you be our Bishop – then walked me up to the front where I greeted the dais and I greeted Bishop Alexander. Then Bishop Alexander said – do you have something to say, will you address the group? So I walked over to the group, now I had no speech in my pocket, you know, all these guys get up to the Oscar microphone and they pull out a speech, maybe I should have but I did not think in those terms. It was not a sure thing as far as I was concerned. I get up there and I greet everybody in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and I say – what comes to mind for me to say to you is that in the Bible it says “Always be ready to give an account of the hope that is in you”. I told them that my hope is in Jesus. That is all I can really tell you is that my hope is in Jesus and I look forward to the opportunity of trying to do some ministry with you in His name. Then my wife came and I was holding it all together at that point, then my wife came

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and I saw her just blubbering and I sort of hugged her and that just... I mean then Bishop Alexander did some formalities and I think we were done at that point. But it was an amazing day. Then oddly, oddly, anticlimactic. So after we have that great moment and Council is adjourned and the long line of people come and shake my hand and greet me and all that sort of stuff. Beth and I ultimately end up getting in the car and I think we went to Starbucks or something and got some coffee [laughter].

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: We get to our house, our kids run out, they have heard the news from other relatives who were there. Of course they do not know what it means... I am not sure I knew what it means.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: As Beth and I are in the house, again, we had not pretense in this, we did not plan anything, we did not plan to have people over. Then one after another for the next several hours, people showed up at the house.

Interviewer: Wow.

Bishop R. Wright: Some food appeared and some libations appeared. It was wild, it was a wild 24 hours.

Interviewer: Is that a Saturday?

Bishop R. Wright: It was and that is where I am going next. Then, I have to, I have a job already, so I have to go to St. Paul's on Sunday and I have two Sermons to preach. I am like... Lord. I am driving down there and it was very emotional. I got there and I said good morning as I always say [laughter] and I said - on yesterday and just sat back. They just stood up and just clapped. If I think about it too hard right now it will make me emotional.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: It will make me emotional. The people that I wanted to make proud, are now proud of me and I think they had been proud of me previous to that. I think they would have been proud of me if I had not been elected.

Interviewer: Sure.

Bishop R. Wright: I do not know what I said after that to occupy the sermon time [laughter]. I just know that something got said and we ended up at the *Creed* that is all I know.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

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Bishop R. Wright: That was my nine o'clock group. Then I got to my eleven o'clock group and I was a little bit more composed at that point. Now that was quite a day.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: That was quite a day. I will never forget that. That was quite a day. At the eleven, of course I had the benefit of having my wife there and having the kids there.

Interviewer: As you look back on it...

Bishop R. Wright: Sorry for all the lighting kind of craziness here.

Interviewer: No. It is a technological necessity to fool around with. As you look back on this journey, where you began and where you are, how do you assess it?

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah, that is a good question. I am big into the assessing business. How do I assess what we have done or just the vocation or all of that?

Interviewer: All of the above.

Bishop R. Wright: Well, where would I start. I think one of the ways that I started off was to distill out of the Diocesan profile what I could discern were the 11 deliverables that people wanted and to begin to make moves in those directions.

Interviewer: Why 11? What are you talking about?

Bishop R. Wright: That is what they had, there were 11 in the profile.

Interviewer: Right, right, right.

Bishop R. Wright: As I read through the profile, I could enumerate 11 things that it seemed that the People of God in the middle and North Georgia wanted.

Interviewer: Okay.

Bishop R. Wright: That they were hoping for in their next Bishop so I started thinking about those. I had some pretty clear ideas when I went in. The good news for me was I was elected from within so I did not necessarily have to get to know this new thing and all these new people. I mean my Clergy colleagues were there, etcetera. You immediately get lonelier upon election because people are trying to reorient themselves to you, you were once 'x' and now you are 'y'. You learn a lot about how people do relationship to authority. Most people have a really immature way to deal with authority, they either have to resist it because they are still working out their mommy and daddy stuff. So if you say the sky is blue, they have to disagree with you just because they have to. That is one thing. Or the opposite of that is they have to kiss your ass because that is the only other way they know how to deal with authority.

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Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: Is to totally be suck ups. You begin to learn a lot about that. I suppose if I were to stop a minute and think about it, I would have to say that...Ambassador Andrew Young preached my Ordination Consecration. Upon accepting that invitation he said – that is with the condition that you come and spend the day with me the day before. I was like – sure. He said we are going to eat some pizza and we are going to talk. When the ancestor speaks you say okay.

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Bishop R. Wright: I go down there and he tells me this wonderful story about his encounter with an Episcopal Bishop when Dr. King was in jail in Birmingham. Out of which comes a *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*.

Interviewer: One of Moderate White Clergy.

Bishop R. Wright: [laughter] Right. Where Dr. King uses the word “disappointed”.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: Ten times.

Interviewer: Yes, yes. Thank you, thank you.

Bishop R. Wright: I never knew that until I did a study here with that and I had never... and I circled them all.

Interviewer: [gasps] I got my assignment today.

Bishop R. Wright: I think it is 10 Reilly, I think it is 10.

Interviewer: Well no matter what I mean he uses it.

Bishop R. Wright: It was again and again and again I was like wow. I mean the one that people really remember is that when he says “that I am a grandson and son of a Clergyman. How else could I be” I mean you’re disappointed in the thing, because you love it.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: That is the one that people remember, but he peppers the thing with disappointment all along. Of course, two Episcopal Bishops sign the letter that prompted the *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*.

Interviewer: Yeah.

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Bishop R. Wright: One was Bishop Carpenter, anyway. So Martin is in jail, but Martin gives Andy an assignment and he says – don't you know somebody in Birmingham that you can get some talks going. He sends Andy out. Now Andy at that point is the young guy.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: He is not as young as John but he is the young guy.

Interviewer: Yeah yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: John Lewis.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Andy says – wait a minute I want to some kind of youth camp or something with somebody, a White person... let me try and find them. So he finds them and so through backdoor back channels, Andy ends up in a talk with a representative from Bishop Carpenter, the white Bishop Carpenter, the Episcopal Bishop of Alabama with their person. So Carpenter cannot be seen with King, King cannot be seen with Carpenter but they are working back channels. Andy told me that story and he went on to say people went to their grave thinking that Carpenter was an unrepentant racist. Another part of Birmingham went to their grave thinking Carpenter was an unrepentant progressive or liberal. Andy said, so what I am telling you is just go ahead and do what you have to do as the Bishop. Do not worry about what people are going to say about you. Just go ahead and do what you are going to do. In a weird way that simple story... I have gone back to it again and again and again because... I have used as an indicator of being on the right path, that if the Left is hating on me and the Right is hating on me simultaneously then I actually might be doing something. That is one evaluative tool that I have used. One of the things that I have learned over the years to say is through the course of a day, am I doing only what the Bishop of Atlanta can do? If I am only doing what the Bishop of Atlanta can do on any given day, then I am probably doing what is right to do. I can call the Governor, I can call Senator Warnock, I can do this, I can do that, I can call Barbara Brown-Taylor and say hey I need you to show up on a podcast. I can call Michel Curry. Those phone calls might not get returned by other folks. There are things that are for me to do. If I can stay on those and widen those appropriately, that is probably what I am supposed to be doing. If I am tempted to be the Canon for the Ordinary, or be the Canon for the Congregational Vitality, I am probably not living up to the Call that is uniquely mine.

Interviewer: I do not understand. What do you mean?

Bishop R. Wright: Well, I mean to say, well it has to do with sort of my philosophy of things. When I first started off, people would plop down in my office and ask me what do you think, Bishop? I had to reverse the trajectory of that. I said well look I am paying you a lot of good green money; your job is to sit down in

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this chair and say Bishop this is the issue. This is my recommendation, what say you? We had to reverse all of that and that I think is what kills a lot of Bishops right now is they get seduced into being the answer man or the answer woman. I think that is not the best way to approach the work. I think the best way to approach the work is to buy as much smart as you can buy and get yourself surrounded with that which keeps you at a certain level of contribution. It is my job to make decisions at nail biter intersections and it is my job about certain things. But it is as informed by my Canon staff, and as informed by the Commission on Ministry, but this notion of partnership and leadership is important to me. I think it is predicated upon, at least in my view of me having a clear idea of what my contribution, my unique contribution is to the conversation.

Interviewer: Okay. How do you determine at critical points that you are close to doing the right thing? I will not put you on the spot and say that you know you are doing the right thing, but where do you get the comfort enough?

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah. Well, what is hilarious about me is that people think I am so progressive or I am this or that. What they do not know is that I am pretty orthodox. So one of the ways that I know that I am doing sort of what I should be doing is if I am tracking with the Ministry of the Bishop as it is outlined in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: What I think we do, we do not do sometimes is that we just, for instance, I put a lot of emphasis on teaching as a Bishop. I have been Bishop now 10 years. I have written every week. I have a meditation every week for 10 years.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: There is nobody in the House of Bishops that has done that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: That is because part of my Ministry is teaching. That comes out of the *Book of Common Prayer*. I teach at Emory now and I have taught at other places as Adjunct. I will deepen that and continue to do that because that is the Ministry of the Bishop is to teach and to form. We are doing a podcast, more than 100,000 downloads, 27 cities... 27 countries, I am sorry, 700 cities because the Ministry of the Bishop is about the Proclamation of Jesus Christ. Did not say that I am limited to one mechanism.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: It just says Proclamation.

Interviewer: Yes.

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Bishop R. Wright: I think our *Book of Common Prayers* is assuming that we are smart.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: And try to hit a need. Those are the examples I would say – how do I know that I am doing right is when I think I am tracking. There is nothing that I have done that people want to label progressive that is not squarely situated in Scripture or tradition. We started the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Reconciliation and Healing here. The only standalone program like this in the entire Church, have served more than 60 Dioceses; have written the only curriculum in the Church for young people wanting to get a sense of what does it mean to belove a community and anti-racist. That is a direct sort of outpouring from what we say in the Baptismal Covenant.

Interviewer: Respect the dignity of every single human being. Right.

Bishop R. Wright: When you fall into sin, will you repent and return to the Lord. I mean...

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: ...it is right there. I think that is sort of what we ought to be doing. That is how you handle the criticism, also, is because you realize that you are standing in something. We just had COVID obviously and maybe we are still back in it. I just heard about a new variant coming over from Europe today.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: People wondered how do we make the decisions we made; how do we implement the protocols that we made about masking...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: ...and vaccination and moving online, etcetera. Well, we say we are a Church that makes decisions based on a three legged stool.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: Scripture, tradition and reason. Well, reason has to do with logic and logic is about science.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: That is how we incorporate science into our determinations. For the people who say, well I love Jesus and I do not have to get a vaccine or wear a mask, that is foolishness.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

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Bishop R. Wright: I want to use the mind that God gave me.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Bishop R. Wright: Where you are _____ [01:02:42].

Interviewer: Right exactly.

Bishop R. Wright: I guess that is how I know, that is how I know. Other matters for instance like when we do discernment people want to come forward to offer themselves as Ordained people. We run a fairly significant battery of clinical tests and evaluations.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: Because this work is so important and so difficult. When the clinician evaluates, they give you five as the most fit and sort of zero as the least fit. One of the things I did was I moved that number up. We were taking previously three with an explanation and I moved us to four and five exclusively.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: I make that call because it is my job as the Bishop to protect the People of God and also protect the Soul **who** is going to give themselves to exercise leadership in that way. I know I am right to make the door more narrow and to make people more fit for the work. I know I am right in doing that. That is my judgment which is given uniquely to the Bishop. I have to deal with the positive consequences of that and the negative consequences of that. But that is why they call it leadership.

Interviewer: Yeah. I am not going to hold you too long but I have a few more questions if you do not mind.

Bishop R. Wright: Okay let's see what we have.

Interviewer: What do your detractors say?

Bishop R. Wright: I mean detractors over the years have wondered, when we went through all of that George Floyd stuff.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: And when we made mandatory all of the beloved community training as a part of being eligible to run a Rector search, people did not like that, people did not like it. We had said it out loud, but I made sure we had teeth in it. So people would not do the trainings...Safe Church and all that, they would not do those things and if they would not do the reconciliation stuff and also some work around gender. So as to be able to say they would consider all

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kinds of leadership for the Church. Then you are not eligible as far as I am concerned. People did not like that, but that is the Law in the Diocese of Atlanta now. You are not eligible for Rector unless you comply with those trainings. And you do not have to, you do not have to, but enjoy your interim.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: That is what you got and to me that is about spiritual formation. I am not trying to be a despot here. Either we believe it or not.

Interviewer: Right.

Bishop R. Wright: Do we believe it or do we not?

Interviewer: Right.

Bishop R. Wright: Maybe you would be more comfortable in another Church.

Interviewer: Right.

Bishop R. Wright: That does not hold itself to those kinds of standards. I have talked boldly about politics, the Gospel is political it is not partisan however. I am going to talk about politics, I am going to talk about politics that betray the Baptismal Covenant. That is my job. I am going to talk about poverty in rural White places and I am going to talk about poverty in urban Black places. I guess maybe the consistent criticism I have gotten is he's too political. What that engenders in me is to make sure that I am faithful when I speak to our Baptismal Covenant and not regurgitating some version of any political talking points for one party or the other. I think that is how you try to stay right. And you apologize when you need to apologize. I have learned an awful lot by trying to have these conversations across middle and north Georgia. In very volatile political times, you learn from other people and you learn that a lot of people are really afraid, they think they are making really good political decisions, but they are just terribly afraid.

Interviewer: Of what?

Bishop R. Wright: Well, this America is going to look very different.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: For instance in Georgia, Black and Brown live births, right, have superseded White live births. If I remember my civics class, the democracy is based on how many votes you get in one direction or the other. So there is some political skullduggery happening because they see the math. This is happening all over the country. They are constraining the Office of Secretary of State in lots of places in Georgia as well.

Interviewer: Yes.

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Bishop R. Wright: Because if you cannot beat them, cheat. I do not think that it is Democratic to say that or Republican to say that I think it is a betrayal of what we say our American values are. I am going to talk about that. We try to talk about it in ways that do not condemn or shame because I think that... Stevie Wonder my great theologian Stevland Morris, Stevie Wonder said “you ought to turn your words into truth”.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: “Turn that truth into love”.

Interviewer: You know we also pray in the Baptismal Liturgy “to give the Baptized an inquiring and discerning heart”.

Bishop R. Wright: Discerning heart, yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: We always have to ask the questions.

Bishop R. Wright: Well you do, you do. Maybe to put a cap on that last piece, have you analyzed or evaluated your work. I think the role of continuing education in my Ordained life and particularly in my Episcopate has been central for me. In other words, to keep on learning. When you talk about asking questions, I took a class at the beginning of COVID at MIT at the Sloane School around leadership as inquiry. That really helped me to understand what the role of the Bishop really is. The Sacramental piece and all that of course we know that. But this other piece is that asking those questions, becoming a better question maker than an answer giver is I think your real add value to the system. With the heft of the formal authority entrusted to me, I can ask my system, I can ask Congregations, I can ask Diocesan structure particular questions. Not that I have the answers to them, but somebody has to tend to that and I think that when everybody in the culture is tending that, that is great. But the person with the formal authority, if they are tending to that then you really create a possibility for new answers which of course is progress.

Interviewer: It is indeed. What do we do about (I know you have to go) about our people who are unchurched? One of the challenges I think I have is that I have so many Black friends of great achievement, high intelligence who are unchurched and at the end of their lives, they say - can we use your Church for the service? I say yes but we have to have the Liturgy. What is that? They say. I am Resurrection and I am Life says the Lord and they say no thank you.

Bishop R. Wright: [chuckles]. Yeah, those are not easy questions. I think some of us are tempted to answer those questions with policy and I understand that, I really, really do. My heart has softened a little bit on answering those kinds of questions or as life has gone on. We are also the Church that prays” Lord there is a faith known only to you.”

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Interviewer: Yes, yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Bishop R. Wright: It puts one at an intersection, doesn't it? This is where I think I want a Pastor and not a policy in those moments. Now there are no doubt, and I have experienced this, people for whom the right answer is that - well this is what we do and if that is not acceptable to you, then with love and grace there is a Church across the street or down the block or whatever it is and God bless. But there are other people for whom we can offer that Liturgy with an explanation, maybe with a cup of coffee and help them even in the last chapter understand that you know you have had a life with God. You may have bucked at the language, but you have had a life with God. Those real opportunities come with a certain amount of sensitivity applied at critical intersections. I mean life is hard and some people nobody could get them, nobody could preach them to that intersection...where they really want to entertain what is the meaning of life; who is this God and what do we owe each other. Cancer can get you to that intersection.

Interviewer: Oh in a heartbeat.

Bishop R. Wright: Divorce can get you to that intersection.

Interviewer: Yes, the loss of a child.

Bishop R. Wright: Oh, can get you to that intersection real damn quick.

Interviewer: And leave you there.

Bishop R. Wright: And then I am not sure if two sentences of policy on a website is the ticket.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: Then I think I want to enter into something with this person and figure out how can we...I mean isn't that the Gospel movement and trajectory. All these people that Jesus could have wrote off with a real terse policy, He stops for the kids, we could have had a no kid policy; He stops for the woman by the well, we could have had a no three marriage policy [laughter]. No dinner with tax collectors because we have a no dinner with tax collectors' policy [laughter]. No pharisees after six o'clock at night and then Nicodemus would have been cut out [laughter].

Interviewer: You know the thing about when I look at someone in a recent past who has shown the capacity to change and people haven't taken them up on it, the change the way we view hope, the way we view love. I think of Trayvon Martin whose friend Rachel Jentel [ph] got on the stand and was put down because she was fat, she was dark, she was shiny, she was wearing big gold jewelry and she did not speak the King's English but someone asked her the question.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.

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Interviewer: Why were you friends? Tell us about your friendship and she said very calmly “well Trayvon never laughed at me”.

Bishop R. Wright: Wow, wow.

Interviewer: Not many people remember that.

Bishop R. Wright: I did not.

Interviewer: It stopped me in my tracks. Someone who saw beyond all of that to see her humanity is not a thug.

Bishop R. Wright: Wow.

Interviewer: But was a Child of God.

Bishop R. Wright: Wow.

Interviewer: Who understood what love was all about.

Bishop R. Wright: Wow. What was her name?

Interviewer: Rachel Jentel J-e-n-t-e-l, I believe.

Bishop R. Wright: We have this wonderful, wonderful Gospel coming up on, is it Sunday or maybe it is Saturday. I do a Confirmation on Saturday. I have them confused. It is two men went into the Synagogue to pray. That is one of my favorite Gospels.

Interviewer: Yes.

Bishop R. Wright: One gave God a great list of his spiritual accomplishments.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Bishop R. Wright: And one man could not even look up.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: One man could not even look up.

Interviewer: Could not even look up.

Bishop R. Wright: I might mess around like that because at the end of that she said “he was my friend he never laughed at me”.

Interviewer: Never laughed at me.

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Bishop R. Wright: We can come to Jesus with all the stuff because He will not ever laugh at us.

Interviewer: He will not laugh at us. He loves us.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: You will find Him in Galilee as He told us.

Bishop R. Wright: [Laughter].

Interviewer: It is not a place on a map.

Bishop R. Wright: [Laughter]

Interviewer: With that...

Bishop R. Wright: I do not know what we accomplished today but we sure had some Fellowship.

Interviewer: We did, but we also got, I believe when you see the transcript, and I hope that you will agree, it was remarkable conversation because you have talked about and shared your spiritual journey; what you hope to accomplish; what you have accomplished but you have put it in terms of your own, the way the Holy Spirit has worked in your life.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah, yeah. I mean I think that is the vocation. Will Willamont [ph] says - one of the saddest ways to live it so live an unsent life, to live like your life is your possession.

Interviewer: Oh.

Bishop R. Wright: And not God's possession.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Bishop R. Wright: That God is hoping and waiting for you to offer it to God. He said – the saddest way to live as a Christian is to live an unsent life. He is right and I think trying to live a sent life and I hope I have, is that one of the collateral benefits of that, direct benefits of that, consequences of that is a spiritual formation life. I think that is what has happened really to me is that from the time I walked into, before hand into large degree, but by the time I walked into St. George's Episcopal Church at the invitation of Linda Tolton, and was delivered into the hands of Father Vincent Harris, it has unfolded one of my favorite Bible verses to try to articulate this unfolding in my journey is Ephesians 3:20 "God can do infinitely more than you can ask, imagine or think according to the faith at work in you". For some reason or the other this notion of a God who can do more than we can ask or imagine, but in partnership with the faith that we actually possess is an amazing thought. I think I am a living testimony to that. Little boy born in an orphanage and here

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I am now, people pay me to ask me what I think. What I try to keep telling them is I think God is amazing. That is my story; I think God is amazing and that is all I really can say God is really, really amazing.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Bishop R. Wright: Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you Bishop.

Bishop R. Wright: Well God bless. I look forward to the transcript.

Interviewer: Yeah, this has been a joy.

Bishop R. Wright: Thank you man, have a great rest of your day okay.

Interviewer: Thank you, you too.

Bishop R. Wright: We will talk again.

Interviewer: Alright.

Bishop R. Wright: Alright bro.

Interviewer: Take care.

Bishop R. Wright: Bye, bye.

Interviewer: Bye.