



# Northwest Texas Conference Lay Organization NWTC Lay Organization Newsletter

## NWTCLO Fundraising Initiative

### Special points of interest:

- NWTCLO Fundraising Initiative
- 10th District Planning Meeting

The Northwest Texas Conference Lay Organization adopted a fundraising initiative at its last meeting. The organization voted on the 50 - 100 envelope drive for the fundraising activity for 2019 - 2020. The drawing will be held on November 2, 2019 at the 10:00 a.m. meeting to be held at Wayman Chapel AME Church, Temple, Texas.

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## 10th District Planning Meeting

The Tenth District Planning Meeting will be at the Hyatt Place, 5229 Spring Valley Road, Dallas, TX  
November 7 - 9, 2019  
And Christian Temple of Faith, 14120 Noel Road, Dallas, TX



## Remembering Congressman Elijah Cummings

Cummings was born on January 18, 1951, in Baltimore, the son of Ruth Elma (née Cochran) and Robert Cummings. His parents were sharecroppers. He was the third child of seven. When he was 11 years old, Cummings and some friends worked to integrate a segregated swimming pool in South Baltimore.

Cummings graduated with honors from the Baltimore City College high school in 1969. He then attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he served in the student government as sophomore class president, student government treasurer and later student government president. He became a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society and graduated in 1973 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science.

Cummings graduated from law school at the University of Maryland School of Law, receiving his Juris Doctor in 1976, and was admitted to the bar in Maryland later that year. He practiced law for 19 years before first being elected to the House in the 1996 elections.

Cummings received 12 honorary doctoral degrees from universities across the United States, most recently an honorary doctorate of public service from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2017.

For 14 years, Cummings served in the Maryland House of Delegates. His predecessor, Lena King Lee, raised funds and campaigned for him; years later, Cummings credited her with launching his political career. In the Maryland General Assembly, he served as Chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland and was the first African American in Maryland history to be named Speaker Pro Tempore, the second highest position in the House of Delegates.

Cummings also served on several boards and commissions, both in and out of Baltimore. Those include SEED Schools of Maryland Board of Directors and the University of Maryland Law School Board of Advisors. He served on numerous Maryland boards and commissions including the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy and the Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel. He was an honorary member of the Baltimore Zoo Board of Trustees. In addition to his speaking engagements, he wrote a biweekly column for the *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper.



Congressman Elijah Cummings was a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

Cummings lived in the Madison Park community in Baltimore and was an active member of the New Psalmist Baptist Church. He married Joyce Matthews, with whom he had a daughter, Jennifer J. Cummings. He had a son and a daughter, Adia Cummings, from other relationships. He married Maya Rockey Moore Cummings in 2009, who was elected chairwoman of the Maryland Democratic Party.

Cummings died on October 17, 2019, at Johns Hopkins Hospital at the age of 68 from "complications concerning longstanding health challenges", his spokeswoman stated. Before his funeral service on October 25 at Baltimore's New Psalmist Baptist Church, where he was a member for 40 years, Cummings lay in state at the U.S. Capitol Building's Statuary Hall on October 24. Cummings is the first African American lawmaker to achieve the honor of lying in state. Following a state funeral which was attended by family and members of Congress, thousands of public mourners were seen entering the U.S. Capitol to see his casket and received greetings from his widow Maya Rockey Moore-Cummings. His casket departed from the U.S. Capitol at around 8:35 pm. On October 25, 2019, the official funeral for Cummings was held at the New Psalmist Baptist Church in Baltimore and was attended by members of his family, various political figures—including former Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton—and thousands of Baltimore residents.

## Go and Do So

Joshua 5:15 says, “The commander of the army of the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so.” Dr. Howard-John Wesley, the pastor of Alfred Street Baptist Church said, “The real power of prayer is when you get to the end of the prayer and say ‘God use me.’” This reminds me that even though there are times when God makes things happen for us, I have often found it to be true that God will move in our favor when we work diligently in the area where we are praying for God to move.

God is ready to move. Racism in our society has taken off their masks and hoods and boldly shown the ugly truth right before our eyes. Political speeches that breed racism and hate and unarmed men of color being gunned down while white men who murder multiple people are arrested with no incident, threats of ICE raids and more have, unfortunately, become the new normal for us in 2019. We have prayed in the church and prayer closets for God to intervene and change what we are seeing daily in our society. I believe it is now time for us to extend our prayers and ask God to use us to implement the changes necessary for today’s world.

If you are like me, you might just pray and ask God to fix it rather than to actually participate in making our society better. However, if the body of Christ does not work toward making this change, I fear things will only get worse. God will be involved in the work we do to initiate change and stand up as a voice for the voiceless.

In the text, Joshua was preparing for the battle of Jericho. However, as he prepared for prayer, he encountered the commander of the army of the Lord. Joshua worshipped the Lord and asked, “What do you command your servant?”

Whatever plans Joshua had for battle were irrelevant at this point because he recognized who was really in control. God was and is in control. The Lord reminded Joshua that the place where he was standing was holy because the Lord was present. The sixth chapter explains the plan the Lord shared with Joshua proved to be victorious.

The body of Christ has work to do! We must organize and assist in motivating our members and community to vote at every election, realizing that every vote counts. Our unarmed young men need protection from corrupt systems in place that are not for them. We have lost enough unarmed young men only to have police officers declared “not guilty.” We need gun legislation that will

keep assault weapons off the streets. There is no need for automatic weapons in the hands of any civilian. We cannot have another mass shooting at the movies, concerts, schools, or anywhere.

If we are a praying church, surely God is waiting for someone to ask, “What do you command of your servant?” If we have asked this question, I’m positive God has answered. Since God has and will answer this question, let us go and do what God has instructed.



Rev. Barry Settle



## Less about Meetings, More about the Message and the Mission



John Thomas, III

*“From June to August, the world’s oldest pan-African religious organization sponsored major events in Alabama, Washington, and Ohio, bringing together over 20,000 people and investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in these*

*communities. In Alabama, the organization became the largest minority faith-based group to establish a partnership with Alzheimer’s Association—a disease that disproportionately impacts African Americans. In Seattle, the organization hosted one of the largest gatherings of African Americans in Washington State history. In Ohio, hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours and over a million dollars in charitable donations were celebrated by members gathering from over 20 different countries.”*

The “pan-African religious organization” referenced in the previous paragraph is the AME Church and the major events were the General Board Meeting, Lay Biennial, and WMS and YPD Quadrennials. Yet, these gatherings are rarely framed in ways that highlight their mission and community impact to those outside the denomination.

When people ask, “What is the AME Church doing?” we sometimes concentrate on routines of anniversaries, meetings and fellowships, and the “business of church” that the larger picture of our impact is not seen. Showing the broader impact is even more important today as the unquestioning esteem for the Black Church from our communities is increasingly replaced by cries of, “What has the ‘church’ done for the community lately?”

The ministry that the AME Church—through its clergy, congregations, and components—is often not widely seen because our message is not effectively communicated beyond ourselves. Additionally, those who wish to know what the AME Church does beyond their local

congregation must often travel in person because most components of the AME Church have not adapted to using virtual communication for information. Much of this has to do with the formation and experience of the persons responsible for guiding our denomination.

The ministries of the Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship, Church of God in Christ, and miscellaneous megachurches that occupy our social media feeds and inboxes are no stronger or relevant than the AME Church. Yet, while we have developed a decidedly insular gaze, their denominations and fellowships are as concerned with what their members see as what the outside world knows. They equally value message and ministry.

This summer’s three major AME gatherings were instructive in where we are as a Connection and where we could go. The Connectional Lay Organization Biennial was the first connectional meeting to incorporate an integrated multimedia strategy ranging from cohesive branding and marketing materials to social media streaming. Over 10,000 people viewed the opening worship service and keynote addresses. A consistent comment on the videos was, “Seeing this online made me feel like I was there.” At the General Board meeting, the Investiture and the Bishop’s Council Worship Service were streamed online for the first time through the Connectional app. The WMS and YPD made use of enriched videos for their Episcopal district and officer reports. While no formal streaming was in place, many attendees used Facebook Live to share parts of the meeting.

Even when not formally in place, people who attended a meeting wanted to share what they were seeing with the wider world; and when formal streaming was available, tens of thousands of people took advantage of the opportunity to be in communion with the AME Church. To make sure that our ministry and message continue to impact, we must not only think about the people “in the room” but also the people that would be there but cannot and the people that could be there if they knew more about us.

Many local churches and Episcopal districts are already making innovative use of communication to ensure that their message and ministry reach beyond their congregations. At a minimum, it is time for the AME Church to give guidelines and standards for all Connectional meetings and Episcopal districts to help shape how we share what we do with the world. As one of the church’s bishops is fond of saying, “Good news isn’t news if you don’t tell it.”

## Think.Heal.Thrive.:The Church's Response to Human Trafficking

With the recent coverage of the arrest and subsequent suicide of Jeffery Epstein, a wealthy man based in New York City, there has been more attention placed on human trafficking within the United States. Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing criminal industries in the world, creating billions of dollars in profits each year. In fact, according to the International Labor Organization, there are an estimated 40.3 million people who are in modern slavery including 24.9 million people in forced labor and 15.4 million people in forced marriage. Of those 24.9 million people who are in forced labor, 4.8 million people are in forced sexual exploitation worldwide.

Human trafficking is not just a global issue but it occurs in our local communities whether urban, suburban, or rural neighborhoods. Human trafficking tends to target the vulnerable including but not limited to the poor, marginalized, homeless, and victims of violence and abuse. Globally, women and children make up 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, according to the International Labor Organization. In the United States, black children comprise more than half of the prostitution arrests for those under 18 years of age, based on yearly statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (US). Thus, black American children represent a majority of those who are victims of this form of modern slavery in the United States.

The AME Church has a history of helping those escaping slavery during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In modern times, however, slavery has evolved into new forms where the exploitation of human beings is hidden in plain sight. As an integral part of the African-American community, churches must respond to the modern slavery crisis.

Here are some helpful guidelines. Take notice. According to the Polaris Project, a nonprofit organization focused on eradicating modern slavery, there are warning signs that can be easily overlooked. Indications of human trafficking may look different for different cases and may not present themselves in all cases; yet, some victims may appear malnourished, show signs of physical abuse, exhibit abnormal behavior such as submissiveness or fear, lack control of money or possessions, or share scripted or inconsistent information.

Make calls. Connect with local human trafficking organizations in your community who can provide resources and training on how to assist in your community response. In the United States, contact the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (1-888-373-7888) which is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.



Rev. Shakira Sanchez-Collins, MD

Pray. Lift up the victims of human trafficking in both personal and communal prayer. Pray that humans will be set free from the bondage driven by greed and evil in our world today.

*The Rev. Shakira Sanchez-Collins, MD is a physician, ordained minister, and health advocate. She writes about issues pertinent to the health, well-being, and lifestyle in communities of color.*

## Judicial Council denies Appeal; Bishop Kawimbe Removed from 19th Episcopal District

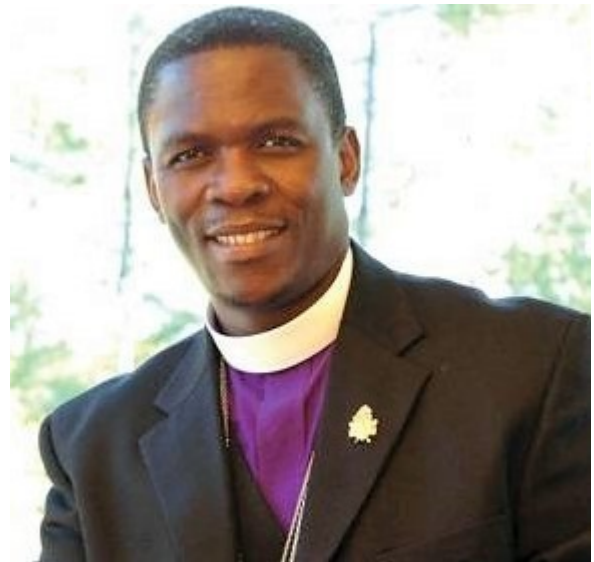
On September 6, 2019, the Judicial Council of the African Methodist Episcopal Church issued a decision denying the appeal of Bishop Paul Jones Malenga Kawimbe regarding his removal from the supervision of the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District (eastern South Africa). On June 24, the Council of Bishops voted with a two-thirds majority to remove Bishop Kawimbe from the Episcopal District “for the good of the church” in accordance with the *Discipline* (Part XI, Section III D (1), p. 172). According to the Council of Bishops, Bishop Kawimbe will “retain full salary and no loss of priestly functions”.

Per the *Discipline*, Bishop Kawimbe had the right of appeal to the Judicial Council, the church’s highest appellate court in the interim of the General Conference and duly filed on July 5, 2019.

In their majority decision, the Judicial Council denied the appeal and sustained the decision of the Council of Bishops stating that: “The problems in the Nineteenth Episcopal District are well-documented. The responses by Bishop Kawimbe and two Presiding Elders to direct questions by the Grievance Committee [of the Council of Bishops] are incomplete and nonresponsive. The decision of the Council of Bishops does ‘not deny salary, seniority or the possibility of another assignment’ to Bishop Kawimbe. There is nothing to suggest that there is a bias against the members of our illustrious African Methodist Episcopal Church who are African. The decision by the Council of Bishops was factually based and not made arbitrarily.”

This decision comes in the wake of over two years of wide-spread controversy across the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District. On July 21, 2017, a mass protest of 400 clergy and laity in the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District delivered a petition to Bishop Kawimbe citing concerns regarding Episcopal staff, accounting procedures, and the pastoral pension fund. In August 2017, the Council of Bishops voted to impose administrative oversight over Bishop Kawimbe including assigning one of its number to supervise his conduct in Annual Conferences. In December 2017, Bishop Kawimbe was tried by a duly constituted church court and found not guilty of improperly removing a presiding elder.

During the 2018 Annual Conference series, several clergy were summarily removed from charges and suspended prompting appeals to the Judicial Council. Although the Judicial Council compelled Bishop Kawimbe to convene Conciliation Committees, the process was not followed



Bishop Paul J.M. Kawimbe

and two clergypersons were expelled in August 2019 prompting suits at the South Gauteng High Court with the expulsion being stayed by the High Court. A mass protest again occurred in June 2019 with participants marching on the Episcopal Office alleging that the forensic audit required by the Council of Bishops had not been conducted.

The final disposition regarding Bishop Kawimbe’s status will occur at the 2020 General Conference in Orlando, Florida. Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr. has been assigned to superintend the 19<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District until the General Conference.

## NWTC LAY ORGANIZATION 200 CLUB

The Northwest Texas Lay Organization organized a committee named The 200 Club with Mrs. Donnie Thomas-Davis as it's chairperson. The purpose of the 200 Club is to raise funds for The Paul Quinn College on behalf of the Northwest Texas Conference Lay Organization. The funds raised will be presented at The Annual Conference each year to help Paul Quinn College's Gap Fund established by Bishop Vashti Murphy-McKenzy to help students. So often, we take for granite that our Paul Quinn College can exist without our help. On the contrary, every small contribution of whatever size helps tremendously. Because we as African American people have yet to arrive at the age where we bequeath our final possessions to our church and our colleges, those institutions survive purely by contributions they obtain from wherever they may.

Please, don't forget to fulfill your pledge of \$50, \$100, \$150, or \$200. Your contribution will be very much appreciated.

Please turn checks/money orders in today or mail to:

**Mrs. Donnie T. Davis**  
**109 W. Robin Lane**  
**Harker Heights, TX 76548**



### PAUL QUINN HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Third Best HBCU Accomplishment of 2014
- ◆ 2013 Finalist for the President's National Community Service Higher Education Honor Roll,
- ◆ 2013 HBCU Best Business Program,
- ◆ Listed as one of 2012's 50 "Most Powerful People, Groups in HBCU Culture,"
- ◆ Named one of the 2012 top liberal arts HBCUs in America,
- ◆ "2012 HBCU Male President of the Year,"
- ◆ "2012 HBCU Student Government Association of the Year,"
- ◆ 2012 HBCU Male Student of the Year Nominee,
- ◆ "2012 Distinguished Campus Leader" Award,
- ◆ Fourth Best Success of the "Top Ten HBCU Successes of 2011,"
- ◆ "2011 HBCU of the Year"

## The Black Church in the 2020 Elections: Who Speaks? Who Cares?



John Thomas, III

Since November 9, 2016, and the (at the time) improbable election of the incumbent 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, Democratic partisans and pundits have asked themselves, “Who will run in 2020?” With the most expansive field of candidates since 1988, the Democratic primary is not only a crucible for the eventual

nominee but also a forum on the future of the Party’s direction and politics in the United States as a whole. African Americans are the bedrock of the Democratic Party, with African American women consistently being its most loyal demographic. According to CNN 2018 mid-term election exit polls, 92% of African American women voted for Democrats.

Despite this strong support, the Democratic Party has been repeatedly taken to task for not strongly advocating for policies benefiting the African American community and not consistently promoting Blacks into substantive positions of leadership. Both concerns have been laid bare in this primary season as candidates have trotted out a plethora of initiatives speaking to the core of Black concerns from reparations to healthcare to criminal justice and beyond. Most of the major campaigns have Black staff in key positions. Candidates know that they must earn the Black vote in 2020 if they have any chance of entering the Oval Office.

If the African American vote is the core of the Democratic Party, then the institutional Black Church is one of the reliable keys to tapping this base. However, who speaks for the Black Church? One of the hallmarks of President Obama’s 2008 campaign was the relationship he built with African American clergy. The progenitor of this strategy was Joshua DuBois, the son of an AME pastor. This engagement would carry on through his presidential administration as the African American faith community had unprecedented access to the White House and the Executive Branch. Nevertheless, some characterized the relationship as one-sided with the administration viewing the Black Church as a privileged interest group and not as a policy-making partner.

The 2020 Black Church landscape is far more complex. On

the one hand, the current administration has largely sidelined the “traditional” Black Church for Black preachers on the conservative political and theological fringes. On the other hand, several African American clergy leaders, responding to the critiques of the Obama-era engagement, have organized into the “Black Church Political Action Committee” (PAC) to formally-engage in endorsements and other activities. Combined with the lesser-known but proven local and regional voices representing congregations and denominations, the voice of the Black Church is a complex cacophony of voices with only one clear message, “Listen to us!”

The candidates have attempted to engage the Black Church in performative and substantive ways. Many of the candidates have visited Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, with several of these visits happening after mass shootings. The Black Church PAC hosted a forum in tandem with the Young Leaders Conference in Atlanta, attracting six candidates for extended conversations with a largely under 40 crowd. As the field windows, some candidates have openly embraced a robust strategy of substantive engagement with multiple African American faith leaders and communities. Others have struggled—or not viewed the necessity—to develop an inroad with the Black church beyond superficial Sunday morning pop-up church visits. We must be wary of the candidates who are happy to drop by to glad-hand parishioners on Sunday, but are unavailable for dialogue during the week.

The primary season is well underway and there will be opportunities for Democratic candidates to engage with the African American faith community beyond Sunday morning call-ins and community roundtables. The AME Church should be mindful that while the Black Church, as an institution, is still viewed as key to elections, we must be clear on what makes our voice stand out. While efforts as the “Black Church PAC” look promising, we must be clearer as the Connectional Church to have a strategy to impact the 2020 election lest we find our voices subsumed to aid the desires of others. We cannot take for granted, nor allow others to take for granted, our unique history in voter engagement, mobilization, and education. Visiting our churches is great but earning our vote is required to build a better America.



# Sundays for Pastors

Right after worship, even after preaching hard, we stand to greet the congregants for as long as it takes because we want to connect and encourage them. As quiet as it is kept, we want to be encouraged ourselves. Suits and dresses may be sweated out and our tanks may be empty but a smile is on our face. We're honored to be your pastor and we never want to lose the personal touch.

Sunday afternoon or evening for a pastor is a sacred time. Pastors rest because he or she has left all that they were given by the Holy Spirit at the place of worship. The anointing that was dripping on us while we were preaching should now be on you.

If you asked 80% of preachers what was preached just eight hours before, it would take about 30 seconds just to remember the text and title because it's now out of us. We walked with it for a week; and because of the foolishness of preaching, others now have what we had. It's now up to them to share it with the world.

Pastors are now tired and worn out. Some even sleep in their "church clothes" when they get home or in the church office.

When we wake up, we're wondering if we did it right. Did we misspeak what God told us to say? How was the sermon? Did it connect? Did we show too much of ourselves and not enough Jesus? Why didn't anyone join? How much was the offering so we can take care of the mortgage, salaries, ministry requests, and denominational apportionments? Why wasn't the attendance better? Is it me or is it just the summer crowd? Why wasn't the choir on it today? Was the sound person alive today? How was the church's hospitality?

Pastors replay the worship experience in their heads because that's what under-shepherds do. They also analyze who can and cannot be trusted with the sensitive areas of our lives and with the vision God has given the church.

So, on Sunday afternoons and evenings, let the pastor rest. Let them spend time with their family, the ones they've neglected sometime during the week because they were preparing a sermon. Don't ask them for anything. As a matter of fact, ask them if they need anything.



Rev. Sylvester D. Patton, III

It's also a day that pastors and their families need prayer. Pray that they are restored and renewed. Pray that God takes care of the needs of their household.

Remember, the pastor who preached like Superman or Superwoman hours ago is still anointed but feels more like Clark Kent now. This is the life of a pastor on Sunday.



**We're on the web at <http://www.nwtclo.org>**

## **Home Is Where the Hatred and Guns Are**

The world is made up of many different people. America encompasses diverse people. Our families are made of different people. The notion that we can somehow stay either in a bubble or a homogeneous context and not engage people who are and have deep disagreements with what we fundamentally believe is simply a form of escapism and prejudicial. We have to be more in contact with each other. Moreover, some people—especially some white people—seem hell-bent on seeing America as a homogeneous country.

How does one characterize this moment in American democracy? What words do we have to truly describe this Chronos moment?

I recall, in 2008, when Senator John McCain (R-AZ) defended then-Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), his rival for the presidency, in the face of constituents spouting racist conspiracies about the then-senator from Illinois. “I can’t trust Obama. I have read about him, and he’s not, um, he’s an Arab,” a woman said to McCain at a town hall meeting in Lakeville, Minnesota, in October of that year. McCain grabbed the microphone from her, cutting her off. “No, ma’am,” he said. “He’s a decent family man [and] a citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues, and that’s what the campaign’s all about. He’s not [an Arab].” We need more examples and acts of courage and civility from politicians and others that Senator McCain displayed during that town hall. However, I also note the mendaciousness, as if there is something wrong with having a president of the United States of Arab descent. Ethical communication is a courageous conversation that starts with civility and honesty.



Rev. Quardricos Bernard Driskell

However, I am fatigued by the news cycle of it all: gun violence, tweets, raids by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and racist comments and attacks on sitting members of Congress who are mostly people of color; and with all of this, I try not to give life or voice to Trump. However, we have endured nearly four years of him feeling validated in all the craziness he has done and said. **Can we take an additional** four years of Trump so that he might amplify his racism; make his beloved daughter, Ivanka, secretary of state; appoint even more “bootleg” people to his cabinet; and likely get to name two extremist, right-wing, and unqualified Supreme Court justices under the age of 40?

At the same time, I do not want to fetishize Trump. He is an expression of American culture. The reality is that all of us are responsible, especially white Americans who silently sit by and do not say or do anything when acts of terror happen in the national ether or local communities.

Additionally, why does it seem that the Republican Party has become a systematic enabler of terrorism? Is the G.O.P. now a party of white nationalists? Will the Democratic Party allow moderate voices at the congressional level? Unfortunately, the long-term view of our politics and the unicorn of President Obama has induced too many into not caring.

It is a question of moral and ethical values and virtues. What does it mean to care and have a deep concern for the vulnerable and exhibit moral probity?

Children, the most vulnerable of our society, are under attack. Our democracy is under attack. The press is under attack. Racial minorities are under attack. Minority faith traditions such as Judaism and Islam are under attack. Morals and ethics, and in some ways Christianity, are under attack by the hypocrisy of some white evangelicals who place their narrow ideology and politics before and above their faith.

How does this quest in present American life take us outside of ourselves and force us to examine the country, traditions, communities, and ourselves in new and sometimes painful ways? Will we continue to turn our faces away and fail to see the evil in our midst? Will we continue to embrace **a culture of guns and hate? Sadly, I believe it will get worse before it gets better. Is this the fall of the United States? Does presidential hopeful Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) have a point that racism is a national security issue? Are we just waiting on 2020?**