

# Truth Builders Ministries

Defending the Faith – Equipping the Faithful



## Spiritual Aspects of Black Lives Matter

By Victor Morris



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

### Introduction

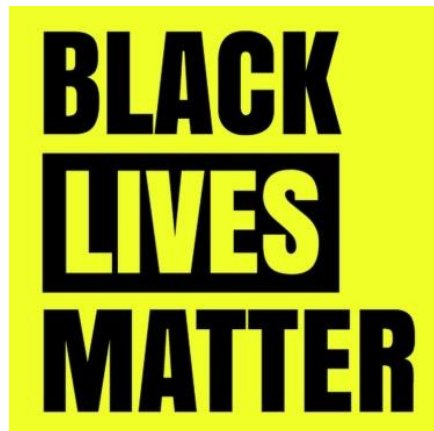
#### Movement vs. Organization

What is Black Lives Matter? The answer depends on who you ask, and in what context. As a broad social movement, it includes people from many different backgrounds. It purports to be a grassroots, loosely organized movement. Probably the majority of people involved in the gatherings, ceremonies, and protests for BLM only see it as such. They are unaware that beyond the “movement” there is an organization with a definite agenda and a highly organized program for achieving that agenda. The intent of this paper is not to criticize those who are innocently involved in what they see as action for social justice. Rather, the purpose of this paper is to expose the religious and spiritual values, beliefs, and practices of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) organization itself. While we could focus on many aspects of this group, we have chosen to confine our study to the religious aspects of BLM.

This paper also is not intended to discount the importance of speaking up for social issues, racism and social injustice included. Christians, even more than most people, should be concerned with how people are treated. Racism is a sin. Racial discrimination and prejudice are completely contrary to biblical moral principles. There is no place in the church or the Christian faith for racism in any form. All human beings are created in the image of God, and are people of dignity

and eternal worth. Even the fallenness of mankind does not negate the inherent value of each member of the human species. To deny this is not only a sin against humanity, it is an affront to the Creator. Based on these concepts, it is understandable why some Christians desire to support Black Lives Matters as a movement. This is not only understandable, it is laudable. However, followers of Christ should understand that the movement of BLM has been created and is being manipulated for purposes that are opposed to Christian beliefs and values.

The issue of supporting social justice for people in the black community but wrestling with the moral and theological positions of the #BlackLivesMatter organization is a hot topic within the Christian community.<sup>1</sup> Our position is that the desire to see justice and fair treatment for all people, black people included, is appropriate. However, the organization of Black Lives Matter is not an appropriate vehicle for Christians to work through to accomplish these goals. The reason we say is covered in this paper. Our position is that Christians should, indeed must, speak up against injustice and oppression. Yet, this must be done in a way that honors Christ and promotes truth. Black Lives Matter, specifically as an organization, and generally as a movement, does not do this. We would encourage true followers of Christ to explore other means of speaking up for black lives that do matter.



### **What is Black Lives Matter?**

As an organization Black Lives Matter is traced to three women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi. At the time of the 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin these three women were already speaking out against various social and racial injustices as they perceived them. In the aftermath of Martin's death, they established #BlackLivesMatter as an online presence to address their concerns. From this beginning a worldwide movement was initiated. The stated primary goal of BLM is to expose and bring change regarding the oppression and injustice directed against black people. However, their values and actions clearly indicate that they have a far-reaching social agenda beyond this. This includes LGBTQ concerns, defunding the police, prison reform, immigration issues, transforming the family, and establishing a socialist government and society based on Marxist models. In its broad agenda we see evidences of the concept of intersectionality, i.e., that various "oppressed" groups must work together for social justice. Further, if people can identify with multiple oppressed groups then that gives them a greater right to fight and be heard. For example, a black female transgender lesbian is more oppressed, and has more of a voice than a black heterosexual man. This is why there is such a strong presence from the LGBTQ community involved in BLM. However, it should be noted that the concept of intersectionality is diametrically opposed to a biblical worldview and must be rejected.<sup>2</sup>

## The Founders



Left to Right: Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, Patrisse Cullors

- *Alicia Garza* is from Oakland, CA. She is an activist for civil rights and social justice. She identifies herself as a Marxist. She is married to Malachi Garza, who is a transgender male. She has long been involved in organizing social protests. She is a primary force behind the activities of BLM.
- *Patrisse Cullors* is probably the most vocal of the three founders. She has been active in the civil rights and social justice movements long before BLM. She identifies herself as a “queer” activist and a Marxist socialist. Patrisse Cullors has been described as “a queer polyamorous practitioner of Ifà, a religious tradition from Nigeria, and a person many people turn to not only as a political leader but as a spiritual leader.”<sup>3</sup> She teaches Social Justice and Community Organizing at Prescott College in Arizona.
- *Opal Tometi* is a community organizer and social justice activist. She is active in the area of immigration reform, and formerly served as Executive Director of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI). Although Tometi claims to be a Christian, she is a strong advocate for homosexual rights. In speaking of the work of BLM she affirms: “...we are diligently uplifting black trans women and so the work on the ground in many places does reflect that.”<sup>4</sup> She is largely responsible for BLM being promoted via social media and the internet.

It should be noted that the views of the three founders of BLM are relevant to our current discussion. Some may question whether the rank and file of the movement is impacted by Cullors, Garza and Tometi. Yes they are. These three are still considered the guiding lights of the movement. Consider this statement from Cullors’ personal website: “Patrisse, Alicia, and Opal have received widespread recognition in their roles as the organization’s visionaries, a practice which is rooted in the fundamental values of Black Lives Matter.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, it is evident that they consistently have been, and still are, primary visionaries for the movement.



## Marxist Philosophy

This paper will only briefly address the issue of the Marxist philosophy espoused by the leaders of BLM. This matter is dealt with at length in other sources.<sup>6</sup> Our only comment here is that the founders have identified themselves as “Marxists.” Consider the words of Patrisse Cullors in a 2015 video interview: “The first thing, I think, is that we actually do have an ideological frame. Myself and Alicia in particular are trained organizers. We are trained Marxists. We are super-versed on, sort of, ideological theories.”<sup>7</sup> Cullors openly asserts that they are knowledgeable of, follow, and are trained in Marxist ideology. We will not take the time to explore this aspect of BLM in depth. Yet, it should be stated that there are spiritual consequences to be found in Cullors’ assertion. Marxism reduces all of history and fundamental truth to economic dynamics. God and religion are seen as irrelevant, and detrimental to the accomplishment of Marxism ultimate aims. Of course, Cullors and other BLM leaders advocate for a spiritual basis for their movement. However, based on their Marxist ideals, it is not surprising that traditional religions are rejected in favor of new and different spiritualities.

One quote will suffice to demonstrate the attitude and agenda of many in the movement. This is from Kshama Sawant, a Seattle city councilwoman and one of the leaders of BLM protests that occupied downtown Seattle. Several years ago in a speech Sawant said: “We are coming to dismantle this deeply oppressive, racist, sexist, violent, utterly bankrupt system of capitalism, this police state. We cannot and will not stop until we overthrow it and replace it with a world based instead on solidarity, genuine democracy, and equality – a socialist world.”<sup>8</sup> This aptly illustrates the attitude of many leaders and activists in BLM.

While it appears that large numbers of leaders in the African-American community stand with BLM, this is not universally true. Because of the overtly Marxist agenda of the BLM organization, many prominent black leaders are critical of the movement. For example, Dr. Carol Swain, a noted

black educator and social commentator states that BLM is a “destructive force in our society.” She also asserts, “I believe that the organization itself is using black people to advance a Marxist agenda.”<sup>9</sup> Dr. Voddie Baucham, Dean of the African Christian University, echoes this idea. In speaking of the words “black lives matter” he comments, “... it's a phrase designed to use Black people... That phrase dehumanizes Black people because it makes them pawns in a game that has nothing whatsoever to do with Black people and their dignity and has everything to do with a divisive agenda that is bigger than Black people.” He cites the Marxist agenda as the reason for his position.<sup>10</sup>



Dr. Carol Swain

## The Spiritual Nature of BLM

The founders and leaders of BLM do not see it as just a social or political movement, but also as a spiritual movement. Cullors affirms that the work of BLM is “deeply spiritual.”<sup>11</sup> She insists that the work that BLM does requires a “connection to the spirit world.”<sup>12</sup> BLM gatherings often begin and end with prayer, and participants are encouraged to dress in white, a sign of the religious nature of the event.<sup>13</sup> Participants at BLM events also participate in a ritual honoring of their ancestors, pouring out libations to venerate them.<sup>14</sup>



Hebah Farrag

Hebah Farrag is the assistant director of research at the University of California Center for Religion and Civic Culture. She is an avid supporter and champion of the spiritual values of BLM. She states that BLM is “faith-infused” and that religion is a critical component of the movement. However, she comments that, “It is just a different and newer faith.”<sup>15</sup> As we shall see, this “newer faith” is an eclectic mixture of traditional African tribal religion, Native American practices, Christianity, the occult and New Age beliefs. Consider this quote: “BLM and affiliated

groups like Dignity and Power Now have been working together to blend a variety of spiritual practices, including Ifá rituals and other traditional African practices, with the idea of ‘transformative justice’ with origins in Quaker and Native American groups.”<sup>16</sup> Farrag is explicit about the syncretic nature of this “new faith”: “The [BLM] movement infuses a syncretic blend of African and indigenous cultures’ spiritual practices and beliefs, embracing ancestor worship; Ifá-based ritual such as chanting, dancing, and summoning deities; and healing practices such as acupuncture, reiki, therapeutic massage, and plant medicine in much of its work, including protest.”<sup>17</sup>

The spiritual element in BLM is also evident to those outside the movement. One observer noted the religious nature of BLM gatherings: “Many so-called protests took on features highly

reminiscent of religion: collective worship, public confession and requests for salvation, devotional poses and gestures, group prayer, the creation of a new pantheon of martyr figures to revere, and the adoption of liturgical rites and rituals.”<sup>18</sup> He believes that the religious features of BLM are one of the reasons for its rapid acceptance and popularity.

We will now examine some of the problems inherent in this “new faith.” The issues that we are addressing are why we believe that it is unwise and inappropriate for Christians to be involved in this movement.

## **Anti-Christian Bias**

Patrisse Cullors says that most in the BLM movement reject the traditional church, even the black Christian church. They do this for two reasons: 1) because of their “queer” identity, which is counter to traditional Christian morals and 2) because they view the church as a patriarchal institution which rejects women. Listen to her comments: “I mean, to be honest with you, so many of us in the Black Lives Matter movement have either been pushed out of the church because many of us are queer and out, many of us — the church has become very patriarchal for us as women and so that’s not necessarily where we have found our solace.”<sup>19</sup>

Farrag echoes this sentiment in speaking of those involved in BLM: “Many of them were raised in traditional faiths and kicked out because some aspect of their identity didn’t fit.”<sup>20</sup> This rejection often results from people’s self-identity as LGBTQ. The BLM position on this matter is summed up in this quote: “Black Lives Matter was founded by three queer black women. It’s explicitly rejecting this hetero-patriarchal model of black male preachers leading the charge and everyone filing in behind them.”<sup>21</sup> This stance of BLM is counter to what has long been a strong feature of the civil rights movement—the involvement of the black church. BLM sees the traditional civil rights movement as antiquated and ineffectual.<sup>22</sup> This includes the historical participation of the church in the movement. Many of the leaders of BLM are from non-Christian backgrounds, e.g. Islam, African tribal religion, or atheism. From their perspective, the methodologies of the previous generation of civil rights activists, especially participation from church leaders, is simply not wanted. Indeed, as Alicia Garza noted, “Ferguson marked the first time in my lifetime, in which the Reverends Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson were begged to leave the scene of a civil rights crime.”<sup>23</sup>

However, BLM goes further than this. As BLM protests and demonstrations have escalated in passion, we are seeing not only a rejection or disapproval of the church and the Christian faith, but



Shaun King

an outright animosity. For example, consider the statement of Shaun King, a prominent and vocal activist in BLM. On June 22, 2020 he posted this message on Twitter: “Yes, I think the statues of the white European they claim is Jesus should also come down. They are a form of white supremacy. Always have been. In the Bible, when the family of Jesus wanted to hide and blend in, guess where they went? EGYPT! Not Denmark. Tear them down.” He followed this with another post: “All murals and stained glass windows of white Jesus, and his European mother, and their white friends should also come down. They are a gross form of white supremacy. Created as tools of oppression. Racist propaganda. They should all come down.”<sup>24</sup> Of course, we know that Jesus was not a white European, but a Middle Eastern Jew. Christians of various ethnicities have historically depicted Christ and biblical figures in a way that has meaning for them. Thus, we see images of Jesus as a man who is Chinese, Indian, Native America, or African. For Europeans to depict Christ in a way that they can relate to is simply following this same pattern. Yet, to urge the destruction of any depictions of Jesus is irreverent at best, and appears overtly hostile. The message of Shaun King was apparently heard and understood. In the wake of his controversial tweets, there was a rash of vandalism against churches, both Catholic and Protestant.<sup>25</sup> Church buildings were set on fire, some burned to the ground. Images of Jesus and Mary were vandalized.<sup>26</sup>

There are other indicators of animosity by protestors against Christianity. In early August of 2020 BLM protestors in Portland, Oregon burned both an American flag and Bibles. This began with one Bible being burned. Then someone brought a stack of Bibles to throw on the fire.<sup>27</sup> This reveals a rising opposition to the Christian faith. In the past, protests may have involved the burning of the American flag and other such images. However, the burning of Bibles is a new twist, and reveals an increasing animosity to the faith. There are numerous videos online that show the response to Christians who try to engage protestors with the Gospel. They are generally mocked, shouted down, and vilified.<sup>28</sup> In the so-called CHAZ area of Seattle, a Christian preacher who attempted to witness to BLM protestors was attacked and repeatedly put in a choke hold.<sup>29</sup>



Protestors in Portland, OR burned Bibles

Photo: The Federalist

## Pagan and Occult Influences

Patrisse Cullors describes the spiritual practices of BLM gatherings: “When we have actions of people — have they ever been a part of a Black Lives Matter action — it’s deeply spiritual. It’s often led by opening prayer. Folks are usually sage-ing. We use a lot of indigenous practices. People build altars to people who have passed.”<sup>30</sup>

Thus in this one simple quote we see several problematic issues:

1. There is prayer. But to whom? Which God or gods?
2. Sage-ing is an indigenous native America practice, which invokes the spirits. It consists of burning the sage herb to ritually clean a space.
3. They use “indigenous practices,” i.e., native non-Christian religious practices, which are pagan and honor false gods and the spirits.
4. They build altars to the dead, which is necromancy.



Photo: uuchurch.org

In speaking of her heritage and spiritual roots, BLM founder Cullors talks about her grandmother: “She raised me and my three other siblings while my mom had to work three jobs to barely get food on our table. And she was both Choctaw, Blackfoot, and African American, grew up in Oklahoma. Her father was a medicine man.”<sup>31</sup> This demonstrates that one of the influences in Cullors’ spiritual worldview is Native American paganism.

The eclectic and pagan nature of BLM spiritually is seen in the “altars using sacred images and symbols from multiple faiths placed to hold space for those murdered.”<sup>32</sup> Notice, these are not just memorials. Rather, they are “altars.”



Even the social agenda of BLM is spiritual in nature. Cullors states: “When you are working with people who have been directly impacted by state violence and heavy policing in our communities, it is really important that there is a connection to the spirit world.”<sup>33</sup> It is important to remember that in her context this “spirit world” is the realm of multiple gods, spirits, and dead ancestors. It is not the spirit world found in our biblical faith.

## The Occult

Much of the ceremony in BLM gatherings is based on pagan religion, especially Ifá (see below). Ifá is not only a religious system, but a divinatory and magical discipline. Seeking the guidance of spirits, ancestor worship, magic and divinatory practices are all part of Ifá, and have influenced the BLM movement. For example, an associated organization of BLM is Dignity and Power Now (DPN), a group which promotes social justice and health issues through what they term “healing justice.” DPN was founded by Patrisse Cullors. DPN hosts “Wellness Clinics” to promote physical, mental and spiritual health in black communities. These clinics utilize a variety of techniques, including drum circles, meditation, building community altars, and “oracle card readings,” e.g. the Tarot.<sup>34</sup> It must be noted that the Bible condemns all forms of divination as sinful and an abomination in God’s sight (cf. Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Leviticus 19:26, Zechariah 10:2, 2 Kings 17:17).



Altar for Black Lives Matter in New Orleans

Photo: vsco.com

## Ifá

Patrisse Cullors, one of the founders of BLM, is an active practitioner of Ifá. Ifá is an occult, spiritual system rooted in the tribal beliefs of West African religion. The practice of Ifá involves divination, magic, herbalism, calling on the dead and making sacrifices to them, praying to tribal

gods, and alternative forms of healing and health practice. Ifá is rooted in the Yoruba religion of West Africa, and honors the traditional Yoruba gods. Ifá is also the name of a chief deity of the Yoruba religion.<sup>35</sup> Ifá honors a supreme deity, Olodumare. However, this supreme god is believed to have little to do with mankind. Instead, people honor and worship a host of other, lesser gods known as Orishas. Divination is an integral part of the belief system of Ifá. It should be noted that the religious beliefs of the Yoruba people are the basis for several New World syncretic religions, e.g., Vodoun (Voodoo), Santeria, Candomblé, and Obeah.

Many leaders of the BLM movement have adopted Ifá as part of their protest activity. Ceremonies based on Ifá are performed before many BLM gatherings.<sup>36</sup> For example, on June 2, 2020 the Los Angeles Chapter of BLM conducted an “action” in front of the L.A. mayor’s house to demand the defunding of the police. Part of this action consisted of reciting the names of blacks killed by police. As each name was recited the crowd chanted Asé. Asé (pronounced ah-shay) is a Yoruba word. It refers to the “the power to make things happen” or “so let it be.”<sup>37</sup> It is both a way of affirming what has been said, similar to saying “amen,” and also a calling on the spiritual powers. Dr. Melina Abdullah, co-founder of the L.S. BLM chapter, says that this ritual was “a form of worship.”<sup>38</sup> You wonder why you have not seen photographs or videos of these Ifá rituals. Cameras are usually forbidden from such ceremonies due to a fear that these religious rituals will be misrepresented or negatively criticized.<sup>39</sup>



Altar for Black Lives Matter in Oakland, CA Photo: East Bay Times

## Idolatrous Worship

Consistent with its pagan spiritual roots, based on African and Native American faith systems, the ceremonies of BLM actually invoke the presence of false gods by “summoning deities.”<sup>40</sup> This is consistent with the practices of Ifá, which worships one supreme god, but also honors and invokes various lesser deities. The deities are prayed to, worshiped and summoned to help the Ifá

worshiper.<sup>41</sup> From a biblical standpoint, this is idolatry. It is also demonic, because the Bible clearly indicates that false pagan gods are actually demons (see Deuteronomy 32:16-17, Leviticus 17:7, 1 Corinthians 10:20-22).



Idols, implements of divination and other Ifá objects

Photo: ifapriest.blogspot.com

## Trafficking with the Dead

The practice of contacting or interacting with the dead is called necromancy. Necromancy is severely condemned in the Bible (see Deuteronomy 18:11, Isaiah 8:19-20, Leviticus 19:31). It was considered such a serious sin in ancient Israel that it was a capital offense (Leviticus 20:27). Yet, this occult and unchristian practice is very much a part of the worldview and customs of Black Lives Matter.

BLM encourages veneration of the spirits of the dead: “It is not uncommon for Black Lives Matter meetings and demonstrations to begin with the pouring of a libation, a ritual rooted in African spirituality where participants pour out a sacrificial liquid offering to give homage to ancestors and call on their names to invoke their presence for wisdom and help. The names of faith-oriented activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Harriet Tubman can make the top of the list.”<sup>42</sup> Hebah Farrag notes that BLM “embraces ancestor worship.”<sup>43</sup>

Evan Bunch is an activist and organizer with the BLM movement. He is also a graduate of Union Theological Seminary. He believes that BLM is grounded in a synthesis of Christianity and traditional African tribal religion. In June 2015 he organized a ceremony protesting the killing of Ezell Ford by Los Angeles police. He describes this gathering as

beginning with traditional Ifá ritual. Participants were dressed in white, as is customary in Ifá rituals. During the ceremony “participants joined hands and a preacher facilitated the ritual, *conjuring Ford’s spirit and transferring it to the crowd*”<sup>44</sup> (emphasis added). Bunch comments that the crowd experienced an otherworldly phenomenon. He states, “It was evident through the participants that they were feeling something that was not of the temporal world.”<sup>45</sup> The described ceremony is necromantic and by biblical definition a form of “witchcraft.” It should be recalled that King Saul was condemned by God for conjuring a spirit (cf. 1 Samuel 28:5-20 with 1 Chron. 10:13-14).



The spirit of Ezell Ford was conjured at this rally in June 2015

Photo: Los Angeles Daily News

Patrisse Cullors affirms the necromantic aspects of BLM ceremonies. She says that “ancestral worship is very important to me.” In addressing the ritual calling of the names of those killed by police, she states: “It is literally almost resurrecting a spirit so they can work through us to get the work that we need to get done.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, when you see groups calling out the names of the dead in their rallies and gatherings, they are actually invoking their spirits. And according to Cullors, they expect the dead to empower BLM activists for the work they are doing.

Another example of calling on the dead occurred on January 11, 2018. Melina Abdullah, one of the leaders of BLM in the Los Angeles area, conducted a libation ceremony at Hollywood United Methodist Church in California. Abdullah asserted that the struggle of blacks in this country is a spiritual struggle, as well social and economic. Therefore, she believes that the spiritual energy of the dead ancestors is needed to empower people for the struggle. Thus, part of the ritual involved an invocation of the dead. Listen to Abdullah words: “We summon those spirits that are still with us. We summon those people whose bodies have been stolen, but whose souls are still here,” she said.” Then she called on individuals spirits by name. “And all of those whose bodies have been stolen: We ask that you be with us. We ask that you work through us. We ask

that we do righteous work on your behalf," Abdullah continued inside the church. "We call on Martin Luther King into this space. Brother Malcom [X], we call you into this space. Ashe. ... Nat Turner, into this space. Ashe. Mother Harriet Tubman. Ashe. We call you all into this space. We ask that you work through us. That you give us power; that the Creator give us power when we come together. This victory is assured. Ashe. Ashe. Ashe."<sup>47</sup> Such a ritual is obviously necromantic and thus condemned by the Scriptures. It is also by its very nature demonic and spiritually dangerous.



**BLM activist Melina Abdullah performs libation ceremony to summon the spirits of those killed by police. This ceremony was performed at a church in Hollywood, CA.**

Even some self-identified Christian leaders within the BLM movement endorse and promote the use of necromancy. For example, the Reverend James Thomas is a professor of Pan-African Studies at the California State University. He is also the pastor of Living Word Community Church. He believes it is important to not only include veneration of the dead in the spiritual milieu of Black Lives Matter, but to make it a part of the black church in America. Thomas' goal is to "to integrate elements of African spirituality like pouring libations and invoking the presence of deceased relatives into Black Christianity."<sup>48</sup> This mixture of Christianity and pagan occultism is an abomination in God's sight, and must be utterly rejected. It was because of such occult and demonic practices that God brought severe judgment on the people of the land of Canaan (see Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

## New Age Practices

In some ways, the Black Lives Matter spirituality is an outgrowth of the New Age Movement. This spiritual system has played a large role in Western culture for several decades now. It is an eclectic mixture of Eastern mysticism, indigenous religious practices, Western occultism, and alternative psychological and health practices. This syncretism is also evident in Black Lives Matter. Consider once again the quote from Hebah Farrag mentioned earlier: “The [BLM] movement infuses a syncretic blend of African and indigenous cultures’ spiritual practices and beliefs, embracing ancestor worship; Ifa-based ritual such as chanting, dancing, and summoning deities; and healing practices such as acupuncture, reiki, therapeutic massage, and plant medicine in much of its work, including protest.”<sup>49</sup> This is very typical of the New Age Movement.



BLM is not only concerned with social justice, but also with health issues. They have formed several wellness organizations to promote alternative health practices. Prominent among these is the use of somatics.<sup>50</sup> Somatics are body movement disciplines which promote health through physical exercises coupled with spiritual and mental approaches. Somatic systems included yoga, Reiki, Feldenkrais and Rolfing. All these systems are promoted as physical health practices, but there is also a spiritual aspect to them. Cullors believes that such practices have the power to “transform” and empower leaders in the movement.<sup>51</sup>

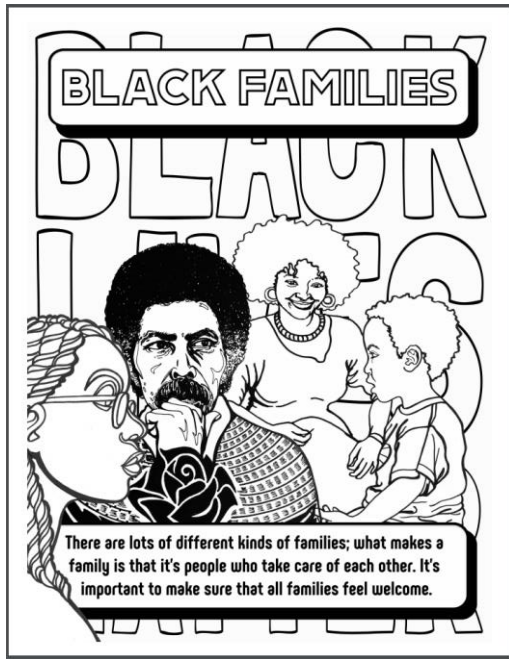


An organization connected with BLM is the Los Angeles-based Dignity and Power Now, founded by Cullors in 2011. To promote the health of the black community, they advocate the use of yoga, crystals, “oracle cards” (e.g. Tarot), aromatherapy, incense, and healing herbs.<sup>52</sup> It should be noted that before harvesting the therapeutic herbs they recommend offering water and prayers to the plants, giving them thanks

for their help.<sup>53</sup> The use of these spiritual and physical therapies are especially recommended at “Rapid Response Sites” where acts of “state terrorism” have occurred.<sup>54</sup> In other words, people who participate in a BLM event may unknowingly be exposed to New Age and occult practices masked as therapeutic aid.

# The Immorality of Black Lives Matter

There are a number of features of BLM that are inconsistent with biblical and Christian moral values. We will consider a few of these.



Page from a coloring book prepared by the D.C. Educators for Social Change

## Disruption of the Family

The family is of critical importance not only in society but in the Christian life. It was the first human institution, initiated by God Himself in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:20-24). It has traditionally been a key foundation of the Judeo-Christian culture and worldview in the West. Yet, it is rejected and vilified by Black Lives Matter. In the view of the founders and leaders of BLM, one of the main problems of our society is that we are dominated by a patriarchal and heterosexual tradition. This is true even in the black community. As Tometi states, “The larger public narrative and discourse, particularly in this moment, is still so focused on black male bodies, cisgender male.”<sup>55</sup>

By cisgender she means the concept that there are only two genders, male and female, and what gender you possess at birth is your true gender.

It is not surprising then the one of the key beliefs of BLM is the rejection and ultimate destruction of the traditional nuclear family—two heterosexual parents and their children as a familial unit. Consider this statement from their website, found under the title, “What We Believe,” “We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another....”<sup>56</sup> Thus, it is evident that one of the primary goals of BLM is the “disruption” of the family and replacing it with new definitions of family, including LGBTQ homes, “villages,” and other alternative familial models.





Photo: Ad Age

## The LGBTQ Factor

One of the most significant features of BLM is its promotion of the LGBTQ agenda. Indeed, acceptance and approval of homosexual, transgender and “queer” lifestyles is a fundamental value of the BLM organization. On their website, under “What We Believe,” they state:

- We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead.
- We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.
- We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).<sup>57</sup>

Members of the gay, queer and trans communities are prominent in the movement. As one observer notes, queer people are “heavily represented in the movement.”<sup>58</sup> Queer women play a critical role in the movement: “The BLM movement is rectifying the all-too-common erasure of Black queer and trans women and making sure they are recognized as the influential leaders of the movement that they are.”<sup>59</sup> Both Cullors and Garza call themselves “queer women.” Some say that BLM is actually a “gay movement masquerading as a black movement.” While this is probably not true, still the LGBTQ emphasis is strong in BLM. The founders of the organization often say something to this effect: “If black lives matter, then all black lives matter, including queer black lives and trans black lives.” For the Bible-believing Christian this wholesale acceptance and approval of the homosexual, “queer,” and transsexual lifestyle and values is certainly problematic. How can a Christian march in a BLM protest while all around are rainbow flags and LGBTQ slogans. It seems inconsistent at best.





Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## Spirit of Lawlessness and Violence

While many within the BLM movement desire peaceful demonstrations, yet it must be recognized that violence seems to follow BLM gatherings. This should not be surprising. The rhetoric of its leaders fosters anger, rage and aggressive action. Alicia Garza notes: “One thing is that you cannot underestimate the power of direct action and disruption.”<sup>60</sup> Disruption is a key technique of the movement. And this disruption is often violent.

As Christians, we may understand the anger, even the rage, at the historic mistreatment of black people in this country. However, as Christians we also cannot sanction the rioting, violence, looting, vandalism, and brutal attacks perpetuated by protestors. Sad to say, these have become common not only in this country, but globally. Churches, businesses, stores, offices, and a host of other buildings have been burned, destroyed. Looting is common in many protests. Untold numbers of police have been the victims of brutal attacks. These acts are completely inconsistent with the teaching of our Master, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

Soon after the tragic and unjust death of George Floyd, BLM gatherings and protests erupted across the country. The violence was evident from the beginning. As one journalist noted:

On June 4, Attorney General William Barr stated that protesters had thrown projectiles in Washington, DC. He noted that from May 30, 114 police had been injured. Nationally, several police and citizens have been killed and millions in damages done. On June 2, a seventy-seven-year-old retired African American police chief who tried to stop looters after a protest was murdered in St. Louis. Police have been hit with vehicles, stabbed with knives, and shot. In Washington, the historic Church of Presidents was set aflame, and a statue of Gandhi vandalized.<sup>61</sup>

Sad to say, such violent protests have become a hallmark for far too many BLM activities. Of course, not all protests are violent. But there are too many to discount them as exceptions. They follow BLM participants wherever they go. Indeed, the incidences of violence are too numerous to even reference all of them here. They include vandalism, painting graffiti, looting, arson, breaking windows, overturning vehicles, assaulting people, shootings, and other types of violent behavior. What happened in Seattle is a prime witness to the agenda espoused by many BLM activists. Buildings were attacked and burned. Windows were broken. People were assaulted. Some were killed. There was complete chaos and anarchy.



The true nature of violence is that it generally becomes self-destructive. It is sad that so much of the violence has actually been aimed at black communities. It is black neighborhoods that have borne the brunt of the vandalism, looting, rioting, and destruction. One online video has a heart-rending clip of two older black businesswomen whose store has been looted and destroyed by protestors. Their plaintive cry is, “Look what you did to my store! Tell me... black lives matter... You’re lying! You looted my store....”<sup>62</sup> One man tells of his visit to Richmond, Virginia in August of 2020. He writes, “While I was in Richmond I saw so many signs in shop windows and on lawns. Many people do not know the background of this group. I am convinced many others truly fear having their businesses and homes destroyed by looters, so they hang the BLM posters up. It is like what businesses in New York and Chicago did in the 1920's & 30's. They hung a



Photo: NBC News

symbol in their window that informed people they had bought protection from the ‘mafia mob’ so you better leave them alone. The BLM sign (they think) will protect them from looters and critics. Sad.”<sup>63</sup> This same trend has been noted by Dr. Carol Swain. She says that many people put a BLM sign in their because of a fear of reprisal. She says it is like “paying protection money” demanded by gangs or organized crime.<sup>64</sup>

Many of the protests in the summer of 2020 involved the defacing or tearing down of statues of historical. However, the violence and basically senseless nature of these protest was evident. Vandals tore not only tore down statues of Confederate generals and soldiers, but also statues of George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, Gandhi, and noted 19<sup>th</sup> century abolitionist Matthias Baldwin. In Denver a memorial honoring victims of the Armenian genocide was vandalized and painted with graffiti. In Salt Lake City a sculpture honoring first

responders was damaged and painted red. In Cleveland the Soldiers and Sailors monument was painted with graffiti by rioters. In Birmingham, Alabama a memorial honoring those who died in WWI was damaged and defaced. Even statues honoring African-Americans were not exempt—for example the Boston statue honoring the all black 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment was vandalized, as was the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial in Duluth, Minnesota, which honored three African-American men who were unjustly lynched for a crime they did not commit. There seems no rhyme or reason for such violence. It is simply rage expressed through destruction and vandalism.<sup>65</sup>



In Portland a statue of George Washington was covered with a burning American flag, and then toppled to the ground (June 19, 2020).

The senseless nature of BLM violence was again demonstrated in Chicago in August 2020. Protesters looted businesses. There were over 100 arrests and 13 police officers were injured. The protesters also attacked a Ronald McDonald House with sick children inside. A Chicago BLM organizer, Ariel Atkins, applauded the looting, calling it a “reparation.”<sup>66</sup> How is attacking a building filled with sick children a “reparation”? How is this an effort for a just society?

It is common for the popular media to present images of blacks suffering at the hands of the police. What you rarely see on mainstream news broadcasts is the opposite. The number of police who have been attacked, assaulted, beaten or even shot certainly numbers in the hundreds, if not thousands. Just one article catalogs dozens of such incidents.<sup>67</sup>

One of the most disturbing aspects of this violent tendency is the repeated cry to “tear everything down.” Such sentiments have been heard quite often, including from the movement’s leaders. Patrisse Cullors is a case in point. In 2015 she was present at a Netroot Nations conference. At that meeting she shouted out: “If I die in police custody, burn everything down... rise the f\*\*\* up! That is the only way mother\*\*\*\*\*s like you will listen.”<sup>68</sup> In June of 2020 Hank Newsome, the leader of BLM in New York, declared: “If this country doesn’t give us what we want, then we will

burn down this system and replace it. All right? .... I just want black liberation, and black sovereignty. By any means necessary.”<sup>69</sup> When confronted later about his statement, Newsome said that his comments were a matter of interpretation—whether they should be taken literally or not. Yet, he did not deny his intent. In keeping with the Marxist revolutionary nature of the organization, it is not surprising to hear comments like this: “This is an uprising. A rebellion. A revolt.”<sup>70</sup> This was from Melina Abdullah, co-founder of the Los Angeles chapter of BLM Los Angeles, in a tweet from May 31, 2020. The Marxist revolutionary program of BLM is well-documented.<sup>71</sup>



Photo: The Hill

What is especially disturbing is the number of Christians who try to justify the violence of BLM protests. Usually they argue that the rage and violence are understandable in light of the unjust and oppressive treatment of black people. While the anger and sense of offense are understandable, from a Christian view the violence is not. A godly person is called upon to reject violent men and their ways (Proverbs 3:31, Proverbs 16:29). Violence is a characteristic of the wicked person (Psalm 58:2, 73:6). Indeed, the Scriptures say that the Lord hates those who love violence (Psalm 11:5). Instead of using violence as a means to achieve our goals, we are instructed to be people of peace, to not seek vengeance, and to leave ultimate justice in the hands of God (Romans 12:14, 17-21).

## Conclusion

The moral impetus that compels many Christians to become involved in Black Lives Matter is understandable, and laudable. As followers of Jesus Christ, and in our Gospel-oriented love for every human being, we must be concerned about the oppression and abuse of any group of people. However, as Christians we must also be concerned with the overall beliefs and values of any group, organization or movement that we become involved in. To support an organization that is directly opposed to Christian truth is inconsistent with our faith walk in Christ. Bishop Harry Jackson is a noted African-American pastor and a co-founder of The Reconciled Church Initiative, which seeks to bring racial healing to the church and to America at large. He comments on BLM by saying, “Black lives matter is true— there does need to be a value of human life. But by destroying biblical foundations you can never arrive at God's justice.”<sup>72</sup> And as Christian theologian and academician Voddie Baucham succinctly puts it: “‘Black Lives Matter’ is antithetical to the Christian message.”<sup>73</sup>



Dr. Voddie Baucham

If we were to make recommendations to any Christian concerned about social righteousness and justice, it would be these:

- 1) Do pray about this matter. Pray hard, fervently and frequently.
- 2) Be proactive in reaching out to people of other ethnic and cultural groups. Build bridges. Dialogue and discuss. Ask questions. Learn about the issue. Interact and empathize.
- 3) Consider becoming active in some way, whether through the political process, speaking up at public forums, attending rallies and gatherings, etc.
- 4) Exemplify Christian love, understanding and forgiveness. Jesus, the Gospel and the love of God can not only change hearts but cultures.
- 5) Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The best answer to the division and inequities of any society is for people to experience changed hearts. Therein lies our greatest resource and most effective change agent.

Yes, do something. Do get involved. (See the next section ideas on engagement.) Yet, with this said, we cannot recommend being involved with Black Lives Matter. When we consider the unbiblical, anti-Christian, occult and immoral values, beliefs and practices of this group, it is not wise to ally yourself with them. This is not the appropriate vehicle for social change consistent with a Christian worldview.

## Engage!

At this time it is vitally important for Christians to take a stand against racism, social and racial injustice, and the disparity that exists in our society. The Scriptures give us no option in the matter. We must speak up. We must defend the poor, needy and oppressed. We must come to the aid of those who are suffering. Based on what we have consider in this document, we cannot recommended involvement in Black Lives Matter. Yet, there are ministries, organizations and resources available for the Bible-believing Christian who desires to see justice done, racial reconciliation occur, and the truth of Christ's love for all people proclaimed. Here are a few suggestions avenues for engagement.

### **One Race Movement**

<http://oneracemovement.com/>

This is an effort that was begun by pastors in the Atlanta area. They seek for racial justice and reconciliation for our entire nation. They have organized rallies, prayer events, seminars and online gatherings.

### **Gracism & the Bridge Leader Network**

<https://www.embracegracism.com/>

Developed by Dr. David Anderson is a philosophy based on grace, offering love, acceptance and dignity to people from all backgrounds. The Bridge Leader Network is an effort “to address the problems of racial differences and offers proactive strategies to help them live the values of reconciliation and multicultural effectiveness.”

### **Wellington Boone Ministries**

<https://wellingtonboone.com/leader>

In studying the issues of racism and racial division in the country, Christian researcher George Barna asserts that Wellington Boone was the “#1 Black American leader in racial reconciliation of the 20th Century.” Bishop Boone has been guiding people in this area for over 40 years.

### **The Reconciled Church**

<http://www.thereconciledchurch.org/>

Bishop Harry Jackson, along with T.D. Jakes and James Robison, launched the Reconciled Church as an effort to address the racial divisions within our nation and the church. They offer a seven-point platform to proactively make a different.

For more information on Truth Builder Ministries:  
Website: <https://truthbuildersonline.wordpress.com/>  
Email: [truthbuildersmin@gmail.com](mailto:truthbuildersmin@gmail.com)

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