



# Interwoven Congregations™

## Quarterly

Issue 2: July 2021

A journal of insight and expression on the road to racial justice and healing

### From the Editor

July is summertime, picnics, our (cautious) emergence from Covid, and our national celebration of independence. In this issue, we probe the relationship between patriotism and the work of antiracism in light of two dates: June 19th (our new national holiday) and July 4th. Is the work of antiracism, with its critiques of our past and present, patriotic, or not? Why or why not? -Pat Jackson

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### *Exploring the Intersection of*



### *Patriotism & Antiracism*



#### **4 Faith Traditions, 2 Questions:**

1. *How do you define patriotism?*
2. *Do you think the work of antiracism is patriotic, or not? Why or why not?*



#### **An Interview with Pulitzer prize-winning historian Professor Annette Gordon-Reed**

A conversation about her new book "On Juneteenth" and the new holiday, her own role on the vanguard of the civil rights movement, and the controversy over history and critical race theory.



## 4 Faith Traditions, 2 Questions: The Intersection of Patriotism & Antiracism



### Rev. Jimmie Hawkins

Director, Office of Public Witness  
Presbyterian Church U.S.A.  
Washington, D.C.



### Salam Al-Marayati

President  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Los Angeles, CA

#### Interwoven Congregations Quarterly (ICQ): How do you define patriotism?

**Rev. Jimmie Hawkins:** Donald W. Shriver, Jr. titled his book, *Honest Patriots: Loving A Country Enough to Remember Its Misdeeds* and it is an appropriate statement for patriotism. William Sloane Coffin stated, "There are three kinds of patriots, two bad, one good. The bad are the uncritical lovers and the loveless critics. Good patriots carry on a lover's quarrel with their country, a reflection of God's lover's quarrel with all the world." Patriotism is possessing such a high degree of love for one's nation that even as one celebrates its accomplishments, one is determined to face its failures. To

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*"Good patriots carry on a  
lover's quarrel with their country,  
a reflection of God's lover's quarrel  
with all the world."*

— William Sloane Coffin

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confront the moments when the nation gave in to its worst instincts and participated in actions contrary to its democratic principles of lifting up its citizens rather than exploiting them. This is done for the purpose of repentance, renewal and recommitment to the purest goals of nationhood, to represent the best human beings have to offer to enhance the lives of all of humanity.

(continues on page 15)

#### ICQ: How do you define patriotism?

**Salam Al-Marayati:** Patriotism is love of country, defending the values of your country. Patriotism can be manifested in many ways; and sometimes it is expressed through dissent. If we feel that the government or political establishment is deviating from those values, we have an obligation to voice our concerns or critique. When the government and the political establishment abide by those values, we show them support. When they violate them, then we must seek recourse. This is all a part of our constitutional principles to begin with.

I believe patriotism is confused many times with blind support or imposed consent. I remember right after 9/11. We came out obviously condemning the terrorist attacks, but we were against the war that followed in Iraq. A disinformation campaign began that we were unpatriotic because we didn't support the war. My response is 'No, we're actually the ones who are being patriotic because we feel it's bad for America.'

And I believe now, twenty years later, the political establishment and our government is now moving back on the authorization for the use of the military in that war. Even when you're a lonely voice, if you believe that this is in the best interest of your country -- and you do it out of love for country, not out of hate for anyone -- then it's important to be that one voice, because that one voice can mean the whole difference later on.

(continues on page 15)





## 4 Faith Traditions, 2 Questions: The Intersection of Patriotism & Antiracism



### Gavriela Geller

Director, American Jewish Committee /  
Jewish Community Relations Board  
Kansas City, MO



### PJ Andrews

Race Discourse Officer  
Office of Public Affairs, Bahá'ís of the U.S.  
Washington, D.C.

#### ICQ: How do you define patriotism?

**Gavriela Geller:** Patriotism is I think most important when thought of as something active rather than something that one passively believes. One is patriotic when they actively contribute to the betterment of their society and their nation. Sometimes that looks like serving in the armed forces or other forms of public service, or engaging in the democratic process by voting or advocating to elected officials. Patriotism is yes, feeling gratitude and a sense of obligation towards one's country, but that obligation can often look like constructive criticism and working to change the status quo. It is caring enough about your country to want it to be the best that it can be, to live up to its promises, and participating as an active force towards that change. This country has given Jewish people unprecedented opportunities and freedoms. In return, it is our obligation to be an active participant in our society and to challenge it to continue to improve.

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*"The work of antiracism asks us to continue that pattern of being bold and brave enough to re-envision our society." — Gavriela Geller*

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#### ICQ: Do you believe the work of antiracism is patriotic or not?

**Ms. Geller:** Absolutely. The work of antiracism is the work of transforming America into a country that lives up to its original promise of democracy

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#### ICQ: How do you define patriotism? And do you think the work of antiracism is patriotic, or not?

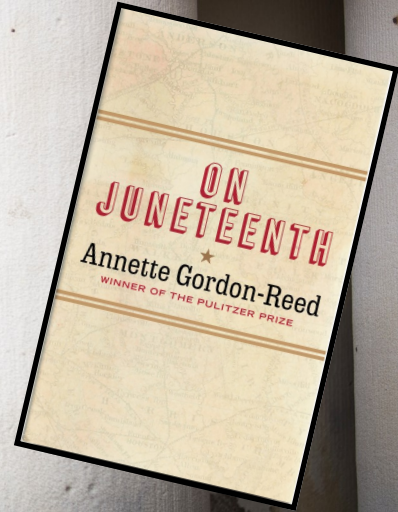
**PJ Andrews:** In defining patriotism and its relationship to the work of antiracism, I am reminded of a quote from [\*The Promise of World Peace\*](#), a statement of the Universal House of Justice, the governing body of the Bahá'í World written in 1985:

*"Unbridled nationalism, as distinguished from a sane and legitimate patriotism, must give way to a wider loyalty, to the love of humanity as a whole."*

The concept of a "wider loyalty" calls for a belief in the inherent oneness of humanity as a fundamental aspect of social reality. This wider loyalty to one's primary identity as a member of the human race, which transcends all man-made divisions, allows for patriotism to find its rightful place as a secondary aspect of an individual's identity. Without that conception of social reality, our longstanding orientation toward othering will be incredibly difficult to root out of society. Indeed, an orientation toward othering – which is intimately connected to prejudice, fear and ignorance – and a commitment to vested interests is an essential element to unbridled nationalism.

By contrast, a sane and legitimate patriotism is grounded in two convictions: that the welfare of any segment of humanity is bound to the welfare of the whole and that our collective life suffers when any one group thinks of its own well-being in isolation from that of its neighbors. When viewed from this perspective, patriotism is certainly coherent with the work of antiracism. ■

## A Conversation with Professor Annette Gordon-Reed



*A conversation with Pulitzer prize-winning historian Professor Annette Gordon-Reed about her new book “On Juneteenth,” her own role in the vanguard of the civil rights movement, and the controversy over critical race theory. Interwoven Congregations Board member Brother John Anderson and co-executive director Pat Jackson conducted the interview and edited it for publication.*

**Interwoven Congregations Quarterly:** In your recent book “On Juneteenth,” you note that “Juneteenth ... appears on its way to becoming a national holiday.” How did you feel when you first heard that the June 19<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the end of slavery had become a national holiday?

**Professor Annette Gordon-Reed:** I was very happy! I was in the middle of doing this [book] tour, making speeches about this all the time, and the possibility that it might become a holiday. People always ask me about it. It happened all so fast - the Senate, then the House, and then the next thing I’m getting invited to the white House. This is all in a two to three day span. It was a whirlwind.

**ICQ: What do you think is the significance of this new national holiday for the country?**

**AGR:** I think it will be a day for people to think about the history of slavery and to think about that particular moment [when the news of the end of slavery reached Texas]. It’s a holiday that is well suited to history, to thinking about what happened before then and what has happened afterwards.

There are people who are concerned about the possible commodification of it – *that will happen* – as it happened with Lincoln and Washington’s birthdays. But I’m hopeful that the seriousness of the day will remain.

**ICQ:** In your book, you cite General Order No. 3 which General Granger issued on June 19, 1865 in Galveston, Texas to announce that “all slaves were free.” But the Order went on to also say “This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves.” Did it surprise you, looking back, that General Granger included that language about equality in the order?

**AGR:** He didn’t have to do it. He’s basically carrying out Lincoln’s proclamation. We know that Lincoln used the Declaration of Independence, particularly in the Gettysburg address, to talk about a new birth of freedom -- what would happen after the Civil War was over. So it made sense for [General Granger] to do it, linking him to the Emancipation Proclamation and the Declaration [of Independence]. It ties the two days of June 19<sup>th</sup> and July 4<sup>th</sup> together in a way that suggests that equality is a founding principle of the United States. That made a lot of people upset, saying that former enslaved people are now your equals. It was an important thing for him to have done.

*(continues on page 8)*





*On the Pulse of Morning*, 1995 © Roderick Terry

## Million Man March

Photos from the 25th Anniversary Collection

By Roderick Terry



We are honored to have the privilege of featuring the iconic photography of Mr. Roderick Terry from the Million Man March on October 16, 1995 in this July issue of *Interwoven Congregations Quarterly*. These photos were recently published in *Million Man March: 25th Anniversary*, a limited edition book commemorating the 25th anniversary of the march. For more information about the book you can contact Mr. Terry on Instagram [rodterryofficial](https://www.instagram.com/rodterryofficial) or by email at [rodterry202@gmail.com](mailto:rodterry202@gmail.com).



*Flag Around Neck*, 1995 © Roderick Terry



**“The Million Man March** was a pivotal moment in the history of African American men. On October 16, 1995, in a demonstration of solidarity, pride and unity, more than one million Black men crowded the length and width of the National Mall, transforming it into a sea of blackness. This Day of Atonement and Reconciliation, spearheaded by Minister Louis Farrakhan, brought together Black men from virtually every state and territory in America. It was the first time in history that so many of us had come together to bond on common ground. For ten hours, we were engulfed in an overwhelming sense of love, camaraderie and brotherhood. Twenty-five years later, and more than a half-century in age, I can tell you, without a doubt, the Million Man March still ranks as one of the greatest milestones of my life. It was a spiritual awakening of the highest order...



*Where are we today?* is a question worth considering — not by us as individuals who participated in the March, but by a nation founded on the principles of fairness, freedom and equal

justice. Despite enormous progress, many of the racial injustices, prejudices, disparate conditions and other circumstances that precipitated the Million Man March are still prevalent today ...

My primary purpose for creating this catalogue and exhibition is to inculcate Black men with a sense of pride, purpose and power, and to help shape the moral, spiritual and ideological frame-

work for our ascension.”

— **Roderick Terry**

from the introduction of  
*Million Man March: 25th Anniversary*

*Photo credit: One Million Strong, 1995 © Roderick Terry*

*(interview with Prof. Gordon-Reed continues)*

**ICQ: We're inviting a few other people for this July issue to think about the connection between patriotism and the work of antiracism. How would you define patriotism?**

**AGR:** It's love of country, but a love that takes into account the good and the bad. It's being willing to make sacrifices, to work for a better future, being willing to defend and protect it. But it's also being critical when necessary because you want to improve it. It's not just 'love it or leave it.'

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*"[Patriotism] is also being critical when necessary ... It's not just 'love it or leave it.'"* — Professor Gordon-Reed

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**ICQ: Do you think the work of antiracism is patriotic, or not?**

**AGR:** Sure it's patriotic. Racism has been something that has held the country back, that has prevented it from getting to its potential. So yes, I think it's patriotic.

**ICQ: You describe in "On Juneteenth" how you grew up in Conroe, Texas and how, at the age of six, your parents enrolled you as the first Black student at the local white elementary school. You wrote, "So I integrated my town's schools, a la Ruby Bridges, with the chief difference that I was not escorted to my first day of school by federal marshals." What was that like for you as a young child?**

**AGR:** It was a very intense time. I knew that I was involved in something that was a big deal. There were people who would come and stand in the doorway and watch me in the classroom.

**ICQ: You were aware of that at the age of six?**

**AGR:** Yes, I was aware of being on display. My teacher, Mrs. Daughtry, I have to say, handled things absolutely perfectly. Some of the kids were good about this and some of them weren't. Even the kids who were friendly with me, if I saw them in town with their families and other people,

they would be cool towards me. That made me realize that if they had been nice to me like in school, that might have upset their parents. That was a valuable lesson about the way whites can police other whites. Even if they like you, and you're their friend, there's only so far they can go because they don't want to lose the companionship, friendship and love of their parents and community. The culture asks members to forgo friendships and connections in order to maintain a notion of whiteness.

**ICQ: Looking back, are you glad your parents made that choice for you, or did you resent them putting you on the front lines of the civil rights movement?**

**AGR:** [Laughs] I've reflected on this and wondered if I would do that with my kids. Resent them? No. I've never resented them for that. I've wondered about the decision, but I think about the time. It was the mid-sixties. The Civil Rights Act had passed. There was a movement. It was *The Movement*. It wasn't a particularly easy thing. I encountered problems, but I just saw this as 'this is my life.' I felt supported by my parents and family. For them at the time, 'The world is moving forward and we're going to be a part of it.'

**ICQ: Is it strange for you as a historian to turn around and realize that you're a part of this historical record yourself?**

**AGR:** It was strange, but it was fun in a way, to turn the tables, because you do have to interrogate yourself as a historian when you write about yourself. You have to stop and say 'Is that really it?' You can't be totally objective, but you try to do that. When you talk about yourself and your family, you do have to ride herd on the possibility that you might be shading things. But it was a fun process actually.

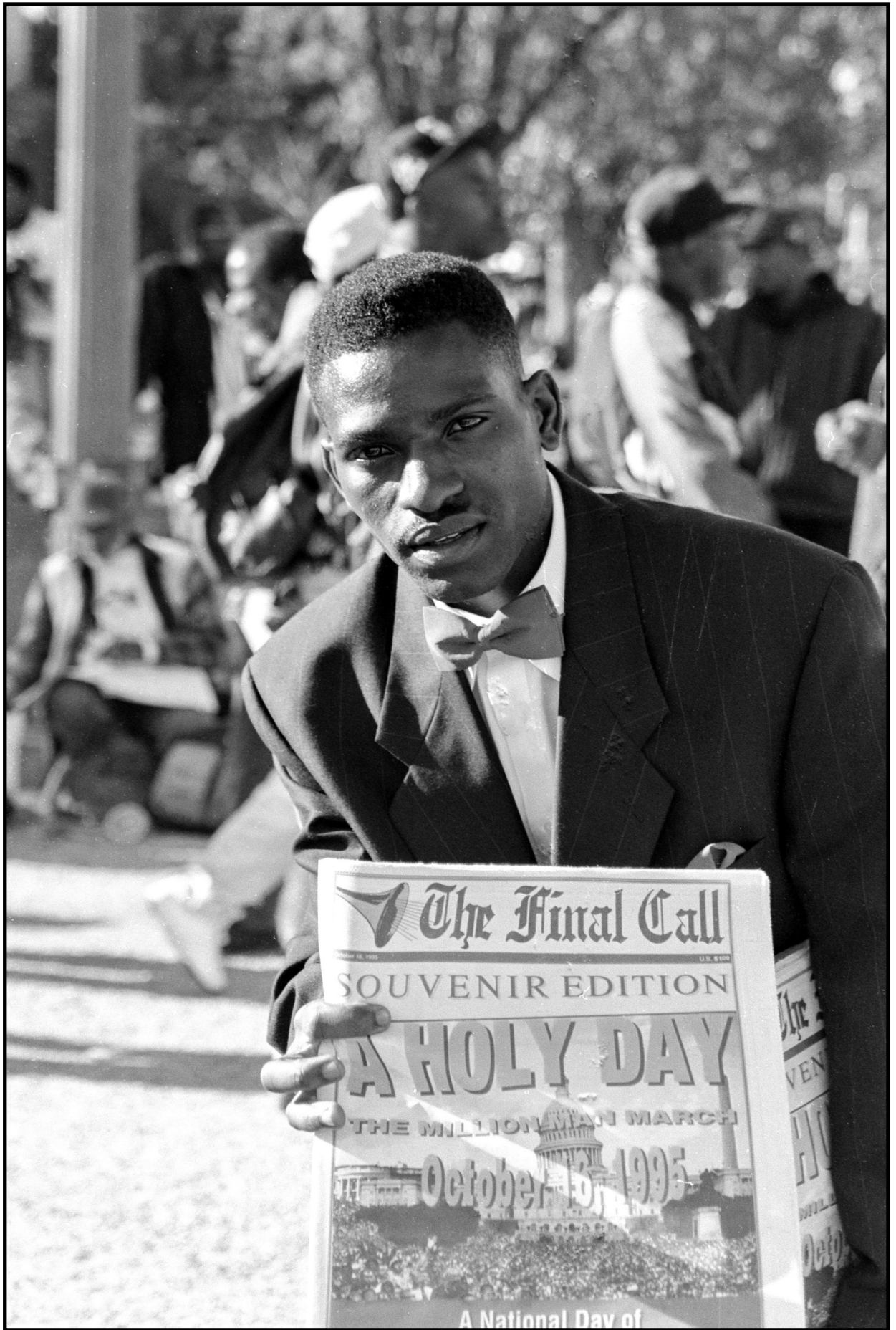
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*"There were people who would come and stand in the doorway and watch me in the classroom ... Yes, I was aware of being on display."*

— Professor Gordon-Reed

*(continues on page 10)*





*Final Call*, 1995 © Roderick Terry

*(Interview with Professor Gordon-Reed continues)*

**ICQ:** You write about how deeply race is etched into the history of Texas: the role of slavery; how the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico barred the entry of any free blacks; and the wave of terror that swept the state after Reconstruction and during Jim Crow. Do you think the people of Texas, or even more broadly, the citizens of the U.S., know our nation's racial history?

**AGR:** I think they know the country's racial values. They know the value of whiteness over blackness,

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*I hope these efforts to keep people, specifically kids, little kids K-12 from finding out about the past aren't successful. — Professor Gordon-Reed*

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but the actual details of it, probably not so much. They know there was slavery, but there's just so many incidents that people don't know about. One of the things that I wanted to do with the book ("On Juneteenth") was to talk about some of those things and to make people understand that when Blacks are talking about this society, that they're not making stuff up. There are things that happened that are serious. Unless you say that Black people's lives and feelings don't matter, you have to attend to them. The stories have to be told and be reckoned with because those things don't just disappear. When things happen -- lynchings happened, murders happened -- they leave a mark on society. And if you're hiding that, you don't understand what this is about. And it's important to know what it's about.

**ICQ:** What do you think needs to be done to increase the nation's awareness of our racial history?

**AGR:** The historiography of slavery and race relations has grown exponentially over the years. There's lots of good material, it's just a question of people taking advantage of it. I think the schools are getting better about teaching these things than when I was a kid. We're seeing some pushback against that. I hope these efforts to keep people, specifically kids, little kids K – 12 from finding out about the past aren't successful.

**ICQ:** Are you referring to the burgeoning debate around 'critical race theory'?

**AGR:** Yes. I think it's a fake controversy. People aren't teaching critical race theory in K thru 12. Critical race theory is a law school class. What it says is that race permeates American law. So even if there are rules against discrimination – the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> amendments and laws – embedded in the law is a racial hierarchy. And these courses explain how this works. This is not K-12 subject matter. What they've done is labeled any talk about race as critical race theory. Somebody said "To Kill a Mockingbird" is critical race theory. If that's critical race theory, everything is critical race theory. Dickens is critical race theory. It's a culture war thing. We have a lot of problems that we're dealing with now. We have an issue of voter suppression, a question about whether our democracy is going to continue. And we're talking about this phantom, making everything about race critical race theory. All critical race theorists talk about race, but not all people who talk about race are critical race theorists.

The notion that you can't bring these subjects up because you're trying to make white kids feel bad is a way of saying that the feelings of black kids don't matter. If I want to talk about the fact that my great, great grandmother was born in slavery, we can't talk about that because white kids in the class

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*"We have an issue of voter suppression, a question about whether our democracy is going to continue. And we're talking about this phantom." — Prof. Gordon-Reed*

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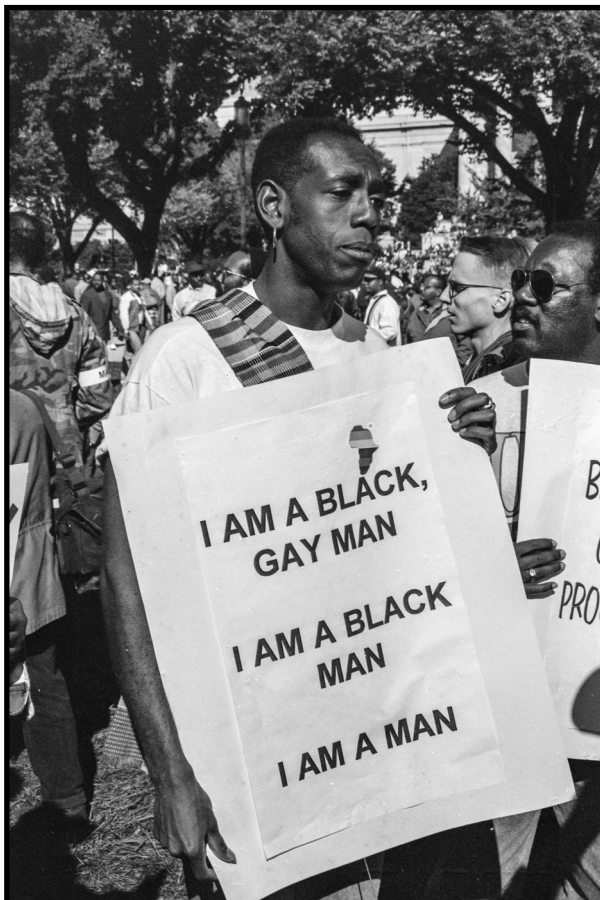
will feel upset because they will identify with the slave owners, and say 'They're white and I'm white, so you're saying I'm bad.' It's a *non sequitur*. You're saying black people have to hide our history and the things that happened to us to make white people feel better, when the answer is 'don't do things that will make your ancestors ashamed.' I think white kids need to learn these lessons and black kids need to learn these lessons.

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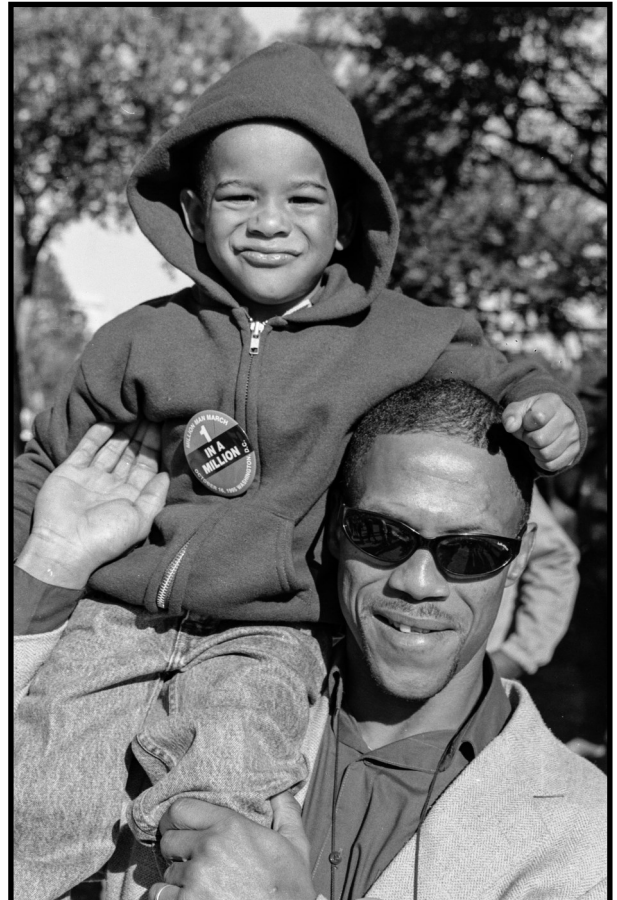




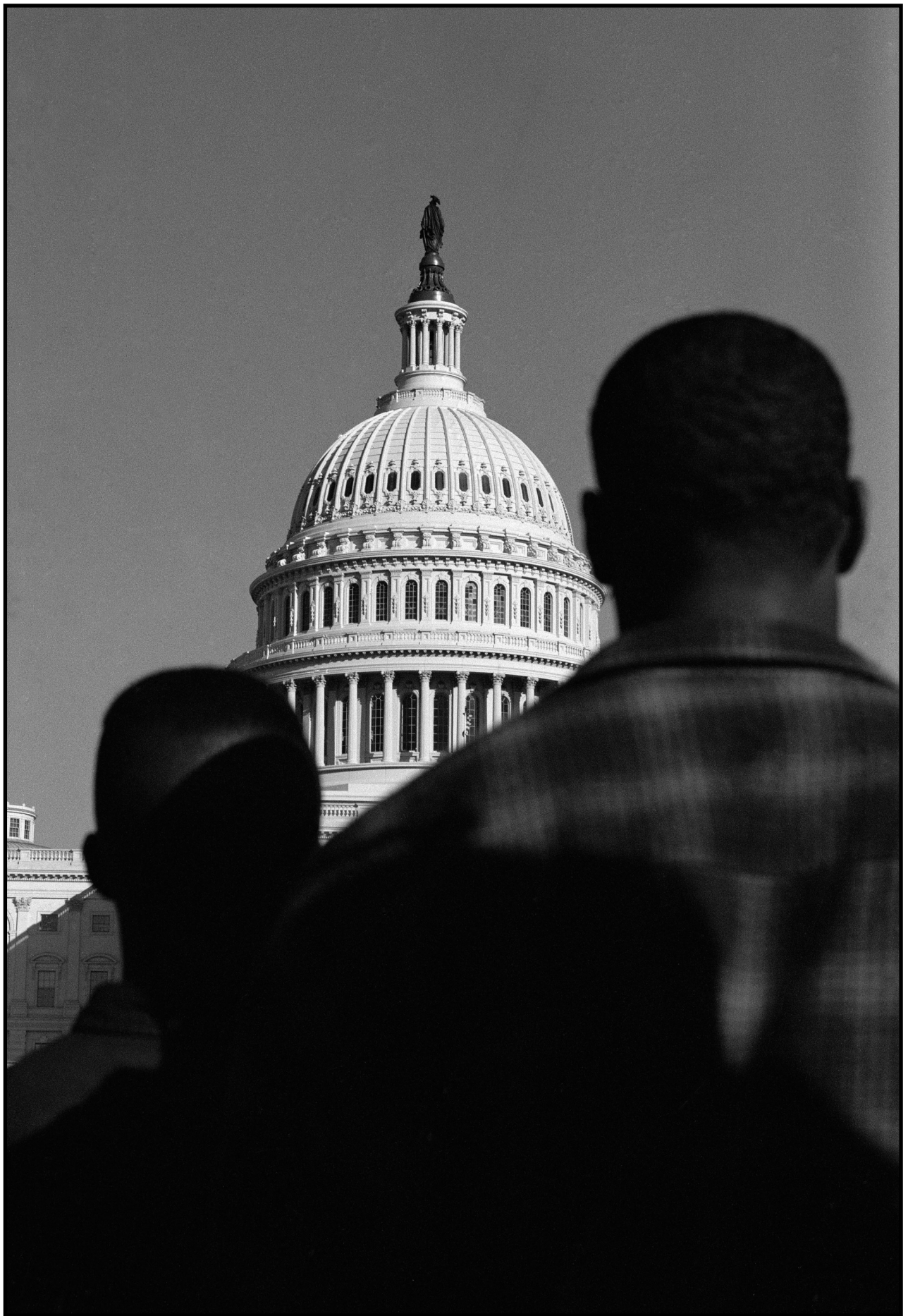
*Fruits of Islam*, 1995 © Roderick Terry



*I Am a Man*, 1995 © Roderick Terry



*Father & Son*, 1995 © Roderick Terry



*Dome and Silhouettes*, 1995 © Roderick Terry

*(Interview with Professor Gordon-Reed continued)*

**ICQ:** Given our nation's history of racial oppression, isn't it ironic for white people to now object to speaking about race?

**AGR:** Texas is in the process of trying to censor what people can talk about in classrooms. But you can't talk about the Texas republic without talking about the Texas constitution and several provisions that explicitly deal with race -- openly protecting slavery, and saying black people can't become citizens. That's race! And that's in 1836! So people didn't just start talking about race now. People have been talking about race since the 1600s in this country. It's a strange thing to say we can talk about race when we're passing laws that prevent people from marrying one another, that say black people get harsher punishments, that black people can be enslaved -- but if we do the history of that, we can't talk about it because it makes everybody feel bad.

**ICQ:** You conclude your book speaking about love, and your own love for your native Texas. You also note how Thomas Jefferson once asked of African Americans, 'How could they love a country that did not love them?' How do you square the evident patriotism and love of country that many African Americans have exhibited over the years with the legacy of oppression and racism which, in various measures, continues today?

**AGR:** I think the people over the years have realized that we've been here since the beginning. For the vast majority of the African American people, their ancestors came here at least by the 1730s. James Baldwin said that if the American negro is not an American, there are no Americans. So why do we concede that the country, meaning white people,

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*"It's a strange thing to say we can talk about race when we're passing laws ... that black people can be enslaved, but ... we can't talk about that because it will make people feel bad."*

— Professor Gordon-Reed

the country doesn't love *us*, and we are interlopers, we don't belong here? It is not *their* country, solely. African Americans have thought that this is their country because of all that we've put into it, against our will in most instances if we're talking of slavery. But we did. And so to say that we have no place, that this isn't ours, that it belongs to white

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*"James Baldwin said that if the American negro is not an American, there are no Americans."*

— Professor Gordon-Reed

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people -- there is a presumption there that I don't think black people share. I saw a film from a Juneteenth parade in Galveston in the 1920s. People are walking along with their banners in their Sunday go-to-meeting clothes, and they are waving American flags. This is on Juneteenth; this is their celebration. There's no doubt in their minds that they are Americans. The enmity that other Americans feel for them doesn't lessen the fact that Blacks are Americans. That's why African Americans have been in the forefront of campaigning for equality and the ideals of the country from the very beginning. The patriotism we've had, and the critique, they go hand in hand. They always have. ■

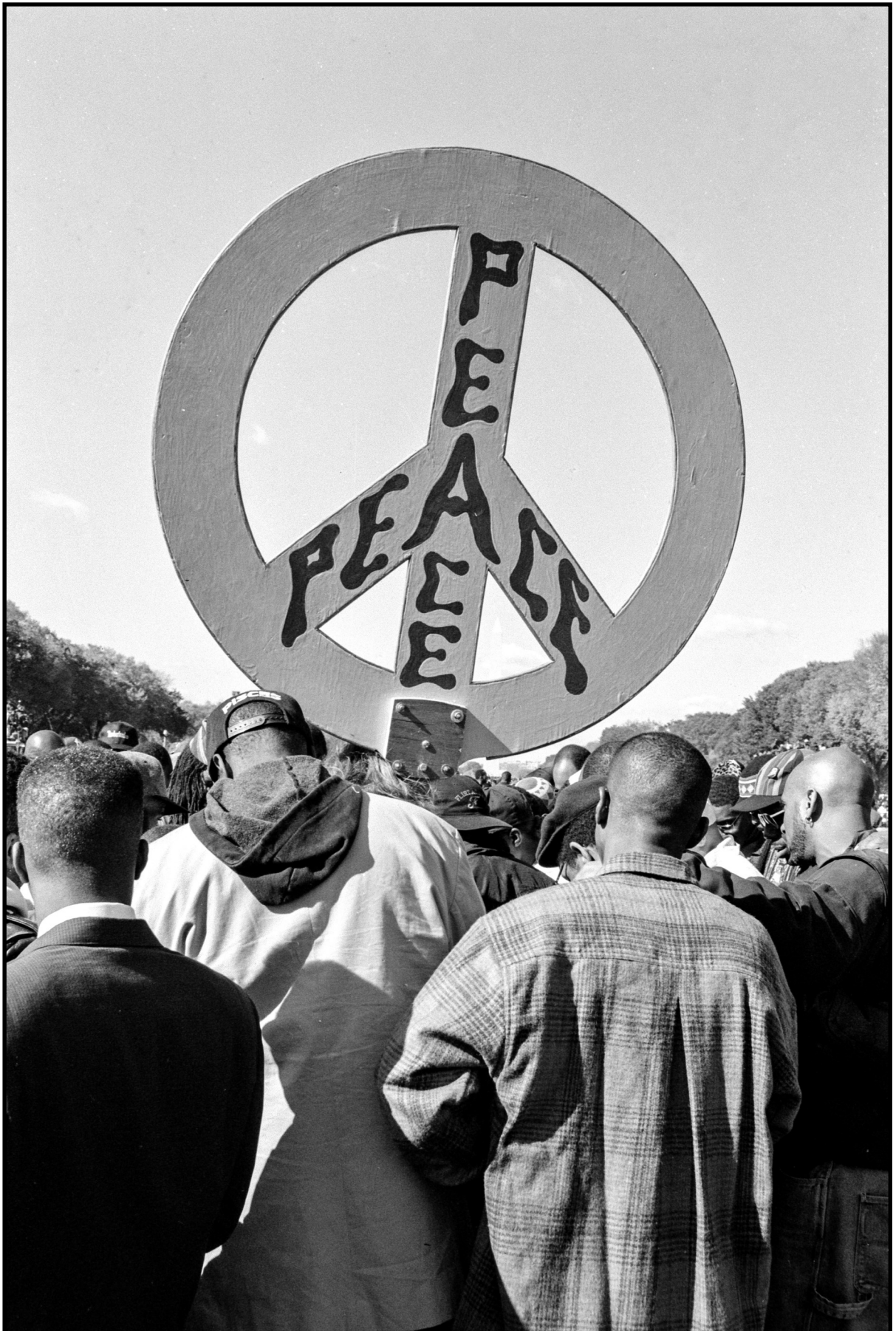
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*(Interview with Gavriela Geller continued)*

and liberty for all people. This work requires that we grapple honestly with our past, and acknowledge the open wounds that still exist, often in the form of ingrained systems. It asks that we envision, collectively, a more inclusive and just future for this country and its inhabitants.

When America was founded, it was quite a radical experiment. There were a lot of folks skeptical or upset about the idea of changing the way things had always been done. The work of anti-racism asks us to continue that pattern of being bold and brave enough to re-envision our society, to say that just because this is how things have always been done, doesn't mean that's how they have to continue. ■





*Peace*, 1995 © Roderick Terry

*(Interview with Mr. Al-Marayati continues)*

**IWQ: What would you say are the values of our country that you are referencing?**

**Mr. Al-Marayati:** To Muslims, American values are Islamic values. American values are justice, equality under the rule of law, pluralism, human dignity and human rights, democracy, freedom, liberation. These are the same values we find in our faith.

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*“The Koran says justice is next to piety. Stand up for justice even if you have to testify to God against yourself, or against your parents, or against your own community.” — Salam Al-Marayati*

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When we look at justice, the Koran says justice is next to piety. Stand up for justice even if you have to testify to God against yourself, or against your parents, or against your own community. That to me is Islamic and American. To be an American patriot, I have to be a good Muslim. And to be a good Muslim, I have to be an American patriot. I don't see any dissonance between the two. The idea of pluralism is found in our country as *E pluri-bus unum* – from many, we are one. And that's exactly what the Koran says: “O humanity” – it doesn't just talk to Muslims – “God created you from a pair, a male and a female, and made you into different nations and different tribes so that you might come to know one another. And the best among you are those who are conscious of God.” So this puts down the notion of supremacy based on ethnicity, social economic status, race, or creed.

**IWQ: Do you think that the work of antiracism is patriotic, or not?**

**Mr. Al-Marayati:** I believe it is. I believe that working against racism speaks to the values and ideals of America. It's interesting because it's the same issue with Islam. Islam at that time of the revelation of the Koran spoke to the issue of human equality -- that if you believe in God, you must believe in the equality

of every human being. And I believe that's also an American principle. The construct was there to dismantle the foundation of slavery. And the prophet's traditions and his preaching were always moving us away from slavery. And the same is there for America. The idea has always been freedom, human rights.

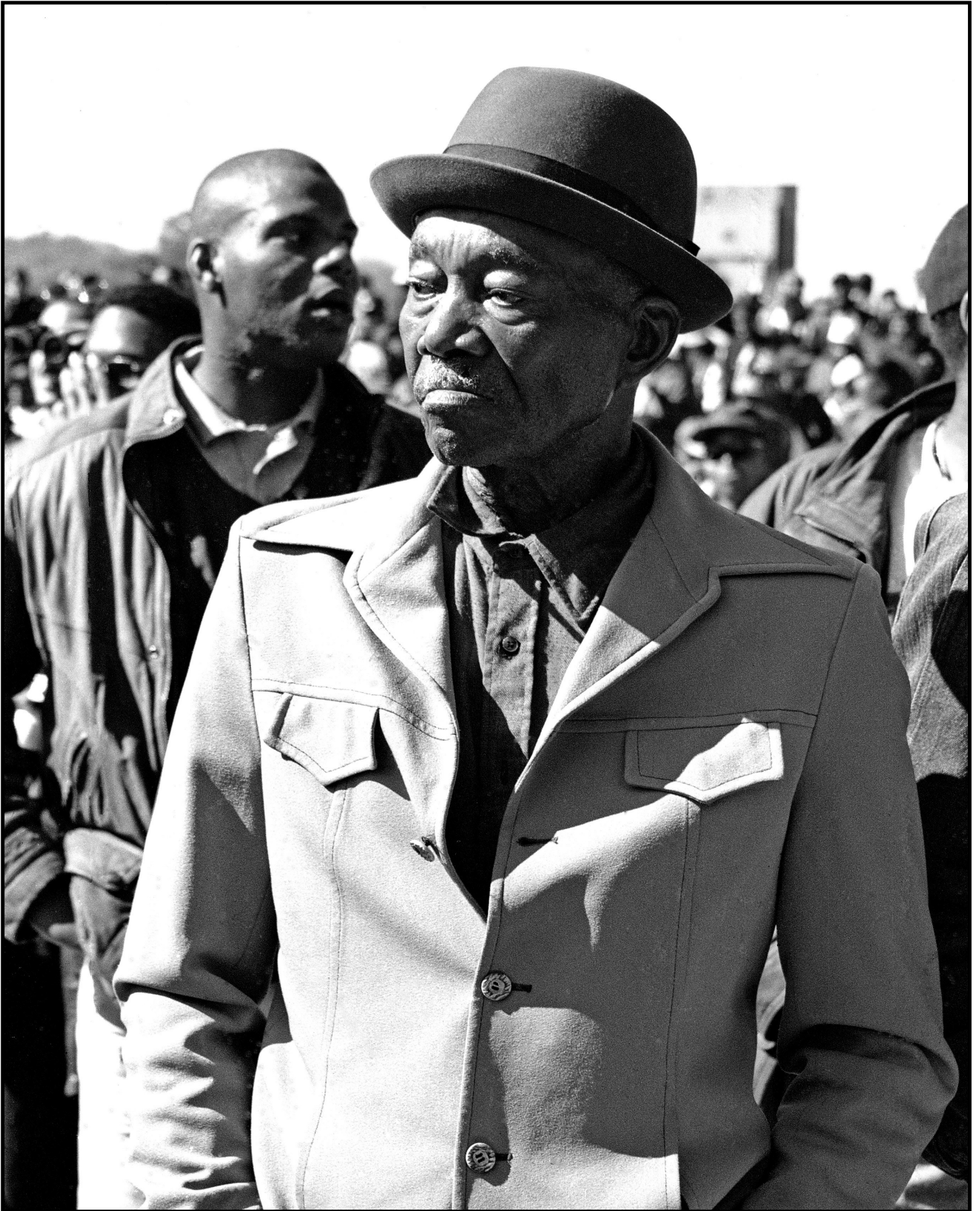
Racism, according to Islam, is something that comes about in the story of Satan. Satan told God, when God created Adam and Eve, “Why did you create them and ask me to submit to them? I am better than them. I am made out of fire; they are made out of clay.” So already, the satanic stance is racist because of this notion of supremacy. That's exactly what we're dealing with to this day. I am better than you because of my race, my color, my creed, the status of my family. Any notion of supremacy is satanic. I believe in America it's the same issue. Racism cannot be accepted as a status quo or an inconvenient reality. It must be fought; it must be countered. Starting with the self. We cannot fight the racism 'out there' unless we extinguish the racism within our own hearts. ■

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*(Interview with Rev. Hawkins (continued))*

**ICQ: Do you believe the work of antiracism is patriotic, or not?**

The work of antiracism is patriotic. Racism is a plague on a nation's soul. It rots it from within by separating people based on a superficial and false separation based on racial differences. It spews hatred between citizens who should be aligned with one another in purpose and in unity. Racism breeds hatred, violence, and antipathy. Patriotism issues a call to all who desire to live in a country experiencing unity and a common vision. Patriotism calls for commitment to the purpose of bringing people together for the benefit of the whole, and not just segments of the population. Antiracism work promotes a healing of past wounds and offers a vision for understanding that racial differences are positive factors in every community. It is utilization of diverse human resources for the upbuilding of society wherein all are valued, offered opportunity and a chance to serve. It is a recognition of our common humanity as children of God. ■



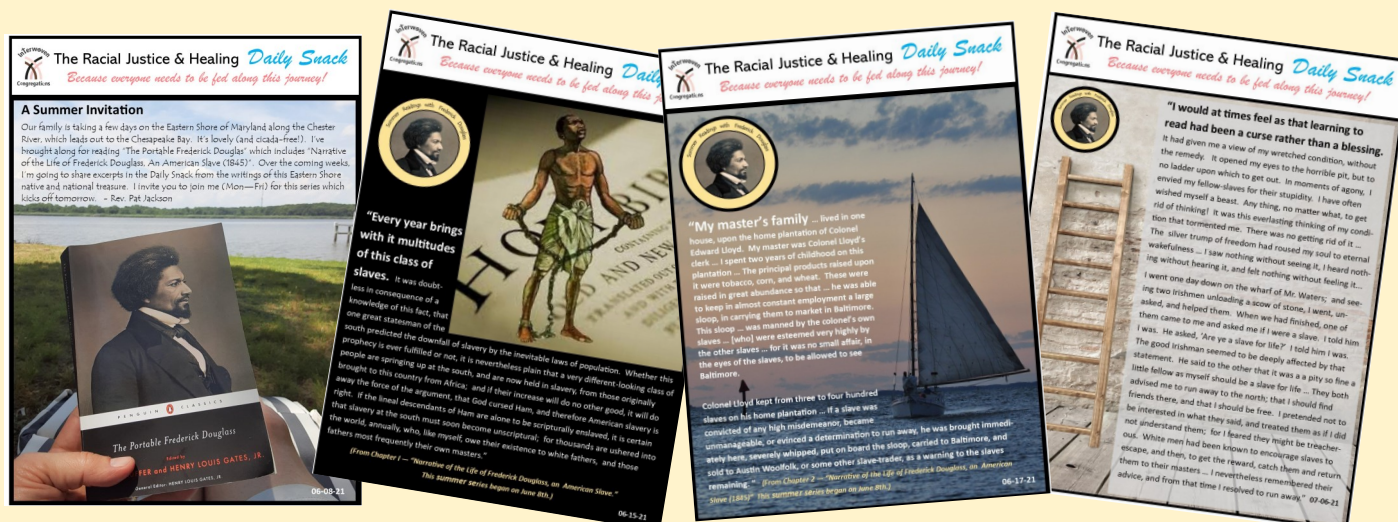
*Old Man*, 1995 © Roderick Terry





## A Summer Invitation from Frederick Douglass (kind of)

It started when I was sitting alongside the Chester River on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, reading *The Narrative of The Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845) by Frederick Douglass. As Douglass' writing poignantly unfolded the experience of slavery through his eyes, it offered an intimate glimpse into this scourge that animates, in part, our work for antiracism today. So on June 8th, we began publishing daily excerpts (Monday—Friday) from Douglass' narrative on the Interwoven Congregations Facebook page. If you haven't had the opportunity yet to engage this series, I want to invite you to dip back to the opening June 8th post and then follow along. Marvel at the courage, shed a tear, and grasp afresh for yourself the hope that Douglass expresses, for himself and for our nation, through this personal epic. — Pat Jackson



## And now an invitation from us — to support the work!

If you are committed to racial justice and healing, then we invite you to support the work of Interwoven Congregations as we organize and equip partnerships of congregations across the barrier of race to help realize a new society in which all people are prized (not simply tolerated) as part of God's intended wondrous creation.

Donate at [www.interwovencongregations.org/donate](http://www.interwovencongregations.org/donate)

*Thank you!*