

Introduction by Dubian Ade, Diversity & Incusion Educator, Cornell Multicultural Resource Center

Checkpoint - Jasiri X

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq6Y6LSjulU>

Gaza And Ferguson: Closer Than You Think

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTub4dViSZw>

BLM video: "When I See Them, I See Us"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsdpg-9cmSw>

So many people have asked us what the purpose of this event. The Zionists have called, emailed and harassed us in order to dissuade our efforts of organizing this event. They claim Rev. Hagler is anti-Semitic and [the event] endorses his hate against Jews and the state of Israel. The purpose of this event is to remind people that Israel is not above critique. To remind people that we cannot excuse genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people which has been made into policy in the occupied territories will not be tolerated. There is no religious mandate in the world that can excuse the systemic eradication of a people. This event is to remind people that what is taking place in occupied territories in Palestine is an example of settler colonialism.

Now you know what settler colonialism is, right? That same process of land occupation that resulted in the genocide of indigenous people in the US, manifest destiny leads to Israel. Israel and the US have much more in common. The purpose of this event is to highlight those commonalities, to connect the dots. For instance, the hyper-militarization of Israel bears extreme resemblance to the crushing force of US policing and homeland security, which routinely destroys the lives of countless people of color. Israeli military weapons look remarkably similar to those used by the National Guard to quell the riots in Ferguson and Baltimore. The tear gas cans used against Palestinian stone throwers are identical to the tear gas cans used against protesters in Ferguson. So much so that Palestinian activists offered tips to Black Lives Matter protesters on how to deal with the gas. It is no wonder when the US provides over 30 billion in military aid to Israel. Israeli guns are US guns. Israeli tanks are US tanks. Israeli tear gas canisters are US tear gas canisters. Israeli bullets are US bullets. G4S are private British Danish security company provides services to US Homeland Security forces, federal law enforcement agencies, and provides those services to private prisons and to immigration and custom enforcement, also known as ICE, which is responsible for the forced deportations of thousands of undocumented immigrants. G4S is hand in glove with the prison industrial complex and is responsible for the mass incarceration and forced labor of millions of people of color. G4S also provides services to Israeli prisons and is involved in the forced incarceration of thousands of Palestinian political prisoners and people from the occupied territories. More than 200 Palestinian children are being held in Israeli prisons where they are brutally treated. G4S provides military services and equipment to Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank and is involved

in the security systems connected with Israeli wall in Gaza. G4S provides repressive policing technologies and training to the Israeli and US military as well as its clients all over the world. It is the purpose of this event to make such critical connections and to expand the conversation beyond accusations of anti-Semitism. There's no proof or reactionary responses when people continue to die, the same actors that are responsible for the destruction of the Palestinian people are also responsible for the destruction and mass incarceration of people of color. It's for these reasons that we say "Free Palestine!".

Hagler:

I want to thank numbers of people. Dubian for his openness and for his commitment for working in this community. To the way that he continues to work along with others and remind us that there's work to be done, that we got to continue to open our minds and spirit. I want to thank Beth Harris for her work in bringing this together. And Amber for –she's been driving me all about and I want to thank her for all the work that she has done, and Dr. Rickford, thank you so much. And I want to thank the entire team, all the friends, want to thank all the supporters who are here today.

As we come to this thing, we saw this video. We saw the video of Checkpoint. And Checkpoint was filmed by Jasiri X who was with us on our delegation in 2014. And Jasiri was walking around with his camera like this, trying to hide it from IDF and security folks so that they wouldn't take it away and then when he got home he put it all together and sent out that he had a word that was speaking through him and to him. And he presented this very very powerful word piece that reminds us just how serious and important this issue is. As I begin to talk I want to just lift up a few things this evening. One is, again an email from Abby Smarten (sp?) who is the executive director of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees. That came in today and in that email she writes,

*"On Friday I visited a UNRWA school at Ayda (sp?) Camp in the West Bank town of Bethlehem to meet were leaders of the student council. I was met by a kind man who immediately offered me coffee, the standard warm hospitality of the Middle East that makes any visitor automatically feel like family. What I learned at this school will forever stay with me. The boys in the student council told me the story of their classmate. Thirteen year old Abed. Last October Abed walked out of the school and was instantly shot and killed by the IDF. No reason, no warning, his classmates were so composed as they told me what a bright soul Abed was. They were so strong as they told me how they still save his empty seat in the classroom every day, decorating it in hopes that Abed will see this and know that they will never forget him. What I learned later is that Abed's father was*

*the man who offered me the coffee. He took a job at the school after Abed's death because he wanted to be close to Abed's memory. Perhaps he also hoped to help and protect other students, no longer able to help and protect his own son. As I was saying my goodbyes to the students, one of the boys left me with the haunting question, "what would you do if you had to live like us?" I had no answer. Since October 2015 this group from the UN, this UN group, has seen an alarming increase in protection violation in the West Bank, including the killing, injury and unlawful detainment of children, collective punishment in the form of tear gas, sound bombs and disproportionate use of rubber bullets and the return of punitive home demolitions."*

As I said we [the 2014 delegation] visited that camp, did you visit that camp? It's right there in Bethlehem as you prepare to enter the town, it's down there. It is a village of concrete, ghetto of small, tiny streets. A place where people live on top of each other in every little space in which they can live. Housing piled up, people there, kids teeming all around the street and the young folks continue to carry on a protest whenever that is necessary, whenever they can. The fact is that as you see all of the young folks, the young folks there, I had the experience of not thinking and pulling out a camera to take pictures of the kids and all of the kids immediately wept, because they know what a photograph can mean, a photograph in the wrong hands meant that they would be profiled. A photograph in the wrong hands meant somehow now they could easily become a victim to Israeli security forces. Can you imagine young people so frightened and so worried and so engaged in what is going on around them that they know the danger of simply getting photographed? Housing piled up on top, the wall that goes by this camp and young folks rushing every week, or every two weeks try to set fire to the wall. I was there 2014 and I just got back and they burnt down the wall. I never heard anybody burning down a concrete wall but they burnt down the wall and of course the IDF came rushing in and again came attacking the young folks.

As I think of that, look at that, I'm also reminded of Baltimore Sandtown. Sandtown in Baltimore where Freddie Gray was locked up. Sandtown and Baltimore where I spent a good part of my childhood in that area of the city. My grandmother's house not too far away. And a neighborhood where there was once pride, a neighborhood where there was once hope. All of a sudden it looks like a bomb has gone off in that neighborhood. And don't get mistaken, it has nothing to do with a riot in 1968. What has gone on in that city has been economic disinvestment from the community, as businesses have left and as also the kinds of jobs that people were able to have like my father who worked at Revere Copper and Brass, or the other folks who worked at Sparrows Point and on the docks. Those folks were able to buy a little piece of home and there's been

economic disinvestment in that community. There's an economic wall that exists around Sandtown. And when you go there, there is this reminder if you've been in Ayda that what is there in Sandtown has its similarities. That there may not be a physical wall but certainly there is an economical wall, there is a political wall where folks just simply don't care and simply prey upon the community. And there you see the police, acting just like the IDF, the Israeli Defense Forces, responding to people in the same way in Baltimore as they do on the West Bank. Baltimore, if you can imagine, once you've taken hope away from people. Once you continue to beat people down and keep your heel upon people's throat, and take away any sense of potential, anything that you do, doesn't get you out of the situation, there is a kind of desperation that takes over. There's a kind of tendency of anybody to survive, they're gonna fight back. And so the police are there to control the fight back. I was saying to somebody that the similarities between what happened to Freddie Gray in the back of that lockup wagon. When I was a young person growing up in Baltimore, there wasn't many blacks on the police department, and the tactic was then when they locked up somebody in the black community, they would look around and get a rookie to ride in the back of the lockup wagon so that when we went around to pick up our neighbor, our neighbor had been beaten to a pulp. That was the initiation rite for folks of color, because see the fact is that they did not look at people as human beings, they did not look at people as having any humanity. They did not look at people, they looked at people as something to control, to exploit and to use. That is the same thing that is going on in places like Ayda. All through the West Bank is that the Israelis are asserting their own power.

We met with the former commander who was really trying to do something to change the situation, because he was trying – he's a Zionist and he admits he's a Zionist. But he said I joined the military and I didn't expect to get into this. What he was talking about was the simply, he said we had these standing orders, and the standing orders is to make our presence known. And if you understand what it means when somebody says to make their presence known, that means they move you with all the force there is to move you. That means they treat you in such arbitrary ways that you cannot even figure out the pattern of why somebody is treating you this way. They come in and they demonstrate in certain ways so that you will truly understand that you have no power whatsoever and they have all the power. When they're locking up young folks, the reason they target young folks has really to do with this issue. Can you imagine snatching your son out, watching your son get a pillowcase over his head, watching your son being shackled, handcuffed, and your natural inclination as a parent or a father or a mother is gonna be to run to the aid of your child. And then the other thing happens where somebody demonstrates, a soldier demonstrates you don't have any power to protect your son. You don't have any power as a mother or as a father to protect your son. It is a statement that continues to have its psychological impact on an entire population. When young folks really feel that they cannot be protected and older folks really feel that they cannot protect their young folk. That is a part of making your presence known,

making your presence known is this thing that folks have continued to deal with and struggle with. But I thank this guy because he was honest.

In Sandtown and Baltimore, it's the same thing – make your presence known. Baltimore got epidemic HIV/AIDS. Baltimore got an epidemic of heroin. Baltimore in that area got an epidemic of illiteracy rates. And yet everybody lives among bombed out, empty building that have been boarded up and some of them are not even boarded up you can stand on the street and look from the front to the back. And people live there. You see what happened in the uprising in Baltimore was the fact that people, young folks, have had enough. Young folks were sick and tired of folks not taking any responsibility for what was going on, and the politicians are just as guilty. And so when the young folks took to the streets, what I saw that night, 'cause I was there in Baltimore, I saw young folks with bricks and rocks going up against cops with Glocks. That's an amazing thing to see, to understand, that they understand that these cops are armed. But folks were tired of being pushed around. The young folks were tired. Old folks don't understand this kind of anger that is pernicious in the community, that folks are really tired watching cops stopping them because they're black or on the West Bank stopping them and harassing them because you look Palestinian. It is a psychological warfare as well as a physical warfare. As I looked at the similarity, young people rising up, I automatically thought about this. I thought about the Intifadas in Palestine that lasted from '87 to '93. Similarities. Folks felt that the PLO could no longer protect their interest. Young folks in Baltimore felt the city council and the mayor could no longer protect their interest. And so they took to the streets in Baltimore and young folks took to the streets in the West Bank as a statement and all of a sudden you saw a similar thing happen in Palestine that also happened in Baltimore, and that is all the politicians had to now figure out how you get in front of the young folks because the young folks are leading. And that's the important thing in every generation is that the young folks are leading. The young folks are sick and tired of accommodating injustice, the young folk are sick and tired of just allowing folks to do them any old way and treat them any old way. And we as older people we need to wake up and get in line and follow our young folks into the revolution, to follow our young folks into the change that is needed.

The civil rights aristocracy and I call it that, the civil rights aristocracy, in many ways they're too old and they're too conditioned and they're too much of an integrationist to understand what our young folks are doing. They've opened doors but sometimes after you open doors, you gotta get out of the way and allow a new generation to take it even further. The fact is that we don't have an open door so that we can just be comfortable for ourselves, you open doors so that other folks will be able to stand, that other folks will be able to experience

justice and hope, that other folks will be able to have—we don't live for ourselves, we live for those who are coming behind us. That is a part of the agenda that is before us today, here in the US and around the world.

There is a paradigm of racism that exists all around the world. You got Donald Duck, Trump, and I gotta admit I put out there that I kind of enjoy Trump. And you know why I say that? Because he has exposed the racism that has always existed. The racism when folks say, I'm conservative, no that means you're racist. A black person for example cannot be a conservative. Because if you're black and you're conservative that means you hate yourself. Because what are you trying to conserve? You're trying to conserve slavery? What are you trying to conserve, Jim Crow? What are you trying to conserve of the discriminatory practices that's been carried out historically by a whole paradigm of white supremacy? You can't be conservative, you got to be a progressive, because you got to move the agenda forward. You can't go back. I don't want to go back, there were no 'good old days'. Walking through Baltimore, growing up in Baltimore, I was attacked by the Klan in Baltimore. I can't go back to that. You see, the thing that we gotta understand is that there is there is this kind of agenda, very racist agenda that exists to dispossess people of color and make sure people of color are always dispossessed.

Now the other thing that hits me, and I just want to talk about this a little. Y'all don't mind me talking about this? I want to talk about Christian Zionism just a little bit. Y'all know about that? Everybody I talk to here doesn't go to church, I'll claim. So I'm not so sure y'all might know about this. But Christian Zionism is something that works in collusion with Zionism. And the Israelis know that very well. John Hagee for example, of Christians United for Israel. They argue that they'll support Israel whether it's right or wrong, doesn't matter. Because there is a whole Biblical idea that's here, that somehow Jesus will not come again until all of the Jews have returned to Israel and have secured the land and then Christ will come. And then Christ will judge, you know, and Jews will have to convert. If they don't convert, they'll go to hell. Right? It's sort of a circular theology. But one of the groups that explores, raises the question why should Christians pray for Israel?

You've got to listen to some of this stuff. In Psalm 122 for example, verse 6 it says "pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may those who love you be secure." God's chosen people, God calls Israel the apple of his eye, which is a term of endearment. Deuteronomy chapter 32, verse 10, Zachariah chapt. 2 verse 8, God adds a blessing to those nations and people who bless Israel and a curse on those who curse Israel, Genesis chapt 12 verse 2-3. And it goes on and says I do not see, God was seen as the husband of Israel in Jeremiah chapt 3, verse 14. God is evidently still concerned Israel's saying in second Chronicles chapt 6, verse 6, yet I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there, and I've chosen David to be over my house in Israel. And it goes on and it says, wherever God places his name is where he still places his love. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, knowing what their fate held and he approached Jerusalem and saw the city he wept over it, Luke 19:41. This

may be the reason that God has prospered the US it goes on to say, America is one of the few nations who has chosen to be her ally. But that seems to have recently begun to change. When America withdraws her support and defense of Israel, God will take his hand of blessing off the US of America. Perhaps he has already begun to do so, since relations – this is a reference to Obama – since relations with Israel have cooled off lately. And then it goes on and says Israel is surrounded by hostile nations and a religion, Islam, that seeks her destruction. A blessing is pronounced on those who will pray for and bless Israel, Numbers chapt. 24 verse 9. God will never abandon Israel and in the end Israel will be saved by God almighty, Malachi 3:6 and Romans 11:1. Since Paul commands Christians to pray for governmental authorities, Romans chapt 13 vs 1-7, why should we not also be praying for peace in the Middle East and in particular for Israel. No, Israel is not perfect, and she has made many mistakes, but they are God's chosen people, Deuteronomy chapt 6, verse 3-4.

See, this is one of the problems. This collusion between right-wing theology and right-wing politics. A collusion between racist theology and racist politics, that continues to perpetuate a system of oppression in the Middle East. I had somebody in my church, because it's so pervasive. We were having a discussion about Palestine and Israel, and a guy I often hear, he's always got something to say, very perceptive very often, and he said to me, he says, Reverend he says, the problem is, is this, is when Israel went into that land, they were told to kill every man, woman, child and animal and they didn't do it and so now they gotta finish the job today. That is the crazy logic that exists that has been nurtured in this kind of biblical fundamentalism, but I got news for you: if there is a chosen people, then that means that God is a racist. That means that God somehow has lost God's objectivity. Right? The fact is if God requires the murder of folks in order to be satisfied then that God is a genocidal maniac and somebody needs to denounce that God and turn their back on that son of a bitch. The fact is if God is like that then God is therefore not something to be worshipped, not something to be loved. But I've got news for you. The fact is that folks want to take our attention away from the love of God, the God who puts humanity and sees humanity in every single creature, the God who lifts us up rather than tears us down. A God that enlarges our hearts to love each other, and to see each other, and to understand the Palestinian hurt and pain and death is just as important as anybody else's pain, death and hurt. To get us to understand that we live in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the world, and yes we are our sisters and brothers keeper.

I stand up here and lift these issues up and you all know as well as I do that folks don't want you to talk about this. Folks don't want you to talk about Palestine and Israel, because Israel was set up as a beachhead, a European beachhead in the Middle East and that's why it's supported so thoroughly by the US of America. I get tired of hearing, oh we got "our friend is Israel". And you gotta wonder, don't the US want some other friends too? You know ?? But we destroyed everything else in the process trying to make the Middle East in our image. And Israel has been made in the image and according to the agenda of the US in 1948 and before. And the fact is again that if we're going to deal with bringing peace into the world, then you gotta have equality. You gotta

have balance. People gotta be equals. And I often listen to the narrative that is put forth in this country. The narrative that always is very blind towards the Palestinians. Very seldom even mention Palestinians as human beings. And then I listen, oh "the Palestinians walked out of negotiations". The issue was that they were talking about, Israel is saying we got the right of return for any Jew who lives anywhere in the world, to come back home to a place that most folks ain't never been. And the Palestinians saying we want the same right. We have an immediate claim and that's not recognized. Or, as Israel would say, we want to live in peace with the demilitarized Palestine. Well, does that mean Israel's gonna put down its arms and also demilitarize? Because you can't have a demilitarize something over here and a non-demilitarized something over there. That's what's going on right now. There is no difference to that. Or you got to move settlers off Palestinian lands. You cannot be talking any longer about a two-state solution when you have allowed settlements, illegal Jewish settlements, to set up in occupied lands. So that there is no continuous territory, and then at the same time you have a total blockade of Gaza, a total blockade from sea and land and air. And also let me add from tunnel as well. The media that says, oh the "terror tunnels". They didn't tell you that food came in through those tunnels, they didn't tell you that building supplies came into the tunnel, they basically just took the press release from the Israeli government and read it out loud to the American public. The game is always being played. The same thing is being played in Baltimore, it's the words that people are using and how they're using them.

When I was growing up in Baltimore, I was one of those guys who had a paper route. I delivered papers and evening. And I would read the papers before I delivered, and whenever there was a crime in Baltimore, it would say if it was white assailant, they would say, "a group of toughs." And if it was a black assailant, they would say, "thugs and hoodlums." Listen to the tone, listen to the words. Or where we allow folks to make Palestinians synonymous with terrorists. It is the same kind of use of the language, to get you all confused, it's also a racial profiling in language. Where folks do not see folks as human. Cause all you gotta do right now in the US of America, you can round up any black person by saying, they were going into the store to buy a weapon so they could carry out an attack on the US government. Where did you get it? FBI lent it to him. He would have said, FBI lent it to them. Guy sitting around not thinking about nothing, FBI goes to him and says, hey hey hey, you wanna get in on something? The hypocrisy that we continue to engage on in this country.

I think the thing that I want to say as we move forward, we have a responsibility, and that responsibility is to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. What can you do? That's a whole lot that you can do. I want to remind you that when we started on South Africa, I remember being called into the president's office when I was in school, and him going, "what are you talking about? Those are Communists. If you don't leave that alone, we're going to have to suspend you from school." Because it wasn't popular. You know, folks



like to talk and think and everyone was engaged in free South Africa, free South Africa. That was laid on, it was like everyone marched with Rev. Martin Luther King. No you didn't! Some of you got there, wanted to march after he was dead. I mean the fact is that it takes time to build a movement. It takes time in order to create a mass consciousness. It takes time in order for folks to understand why you're doing what you're doing, so sisters and brothers, what we can do right now is spread the word neighbor to neighbor, spread the word in your church, spread the word in your synagogue. Spread the word in your clubs, spread the word and allow folks. I always say to folks if you want to talk about this issue, and you're female and you got a guy hitting on you, turn to him and say, "where do you stand on Palestine?" And if you're a young man got a woman hitting on you, turn around and ask her "where do you stand on Palestine?". The fact is that we gotta talk it up, we can't just do it in the dark under cover among ourselves. We really got to be the purveyors of truth in this society, because the newspapers are not going to tell it, the State Dept. is not going to tell it, it is our minds and feet gotta be the ones who tell it and spread it and make it happen.

Support BDS. Folks will say, if you support BDS, it will destroy Israel. South Africa's still standing. Help me, y'all. It got Mandela out of jail. It caused elections to take place in South Africa. It caused South Africa to have to dialogue about its own problems. And sometimes you know and all the time I would say this, all the time it is better to put that kind of pressure on it rather than to ignore people and allow violence to continue to perpetuate itself. BDS is a non-violent movement. BDS is a movement that causes changes. When we started it as you know, everybody poo-pooed the ide, it don't mean nothing. Then all over the country all of a sudden, everyone's trying to pass anti-BDS legislation to put folks on a list so that people can be penalized who stand up and speak in favor of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. Oh, you gotta target those politicians, anybody who brings one of those things up, you need to target it, you need to be together in terms of what you do, and you need to remove those folks from office, because they're not listening to people, they're not listening to justice, they are listening to a lobby that has lined their pockets so they will do what the lobby wants them to do, the Zionist lobby in this country. The Zionist lobby around the world.

The other thing I want to point out is if you don't think Israel and the leadership and the leadership in Israel, the Zionist movement, if you don't think they're racist, the fact is when Benjamin Netanyahu came and spoke to Congress he didn't even stop by the president's office. He didn't even follow what is simple protocol. Why? Because it was a black man in the office. And everybody knows when you go to preach in somebody else's church, no matter whether you're chair of the deacon's board, I'm gonna call up the pastor and say "is it okay for me to come and appear in your pulpit?". And I wait for the pastor, simple protocol. That's how I know at the core of their [Israel's] conscience it's racist. When Baltimore was happening, what was going on in Jerusalem,

Ethiopians were also marching against police profiling and misconduct. What is taking place here is taking place over there. We followed Africans who had broken out of prison and they were marching, we heard they were marching when we were there in January of 2014. So we caught up with them and we began to talk with them. And they were from the Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, places like that. And they were picked up and put in work camps in Israel by the Israelis. In work camps, so some of them broke out and started marching. The Israelis will not call them refugees. They are called “infiltrators. Understand, infiltrators is a military term. What do you do with infiltrators? Somebody help me. Huh? [calling out] You get rid of them, right? Sometimes you shoot them. Infiltrators. And the reason they used that language is because under international law, refugees are afforded rights. And so as long as they believe—this is where they’re playing word games—as long as they believe they don’t have to call them refugees but infiltrators, they do not have to afford them the rights that would have to be afforded refugees. It’s like the three-fifths of a human being argument, when the southern states wanted to enlarge their congressional delegation, they wanted to count black folks as three-fifths of a human being in order to give their states a larger census count and they could have a larger delegation going into Congress. But they could not make them a full human being because it would raise up some issues of how can you treat human beings in this fashion? How can you treat human beings with so little respect and dignity? It is the same kind of argument, word games that continue to take us down the road. And I’m just begging us to examine language before we use it. And before we allow it to be used.

I just did a paper on a chapter on anti-Semitism, that’s going to come out in a book. And one of the things I was looking at, is that you have 300 million Semitic speakers that speak Arab. You also got Amharic as a Semitic language, which is spoken by Ethiopians. And a number of other languages, like Aramaic, then of course Hebrew. So when folks say that I’m anti-Semitic, I got news for you, I’m not anti-Arab. Are you kidding me? I’m not anti-Ethiopian. Hear me now. What I’m getting at is the use and manipulation of the language that takes away the language and the dignity from other groups, because all of a sudden anti-Semitism why does that only mean Jewish?

The other issue I lift up is the Holocaust. I’m not denying there was a Holocaust, horrific terrible. But it was a Holocaust. Because right now we’re standing on ground that was somebody else’s that had to go through their own Holocaust. Or the Middle Passage that was its own Holocaust. Or chattel slavery that lasted for 400 years in this country that was its own Holocaust. There are other Holocausts that exist in the world, in Africa, in North America, in South America, Central America, the Caribbean. Sisters and brothers, somebody can’t take over the language and therefore strip everybody else of their own pain and history. And what I’m getting at here is that this is a form of exceptionalism, where in the terms that I have used it means that my pain is more

important than your pain and your suffering. And genocidal policies carried out against you. That's what means "the" and it only applies to me, rather than "a" and it applies to other folks who have gone through it. And so, and then when I say "anti-Semitic" and only means anti-Jewish, what happens to everybody else? Sisters and brothers we should be talking about yes anti-Semitism exists in America, and I think it's Islamophobia [clapping]. Look what is going on. Like I said, you got this uncovered racist talking about Muslims as terrorists, we gotta protect ourselves. Somebody got beat up the other day because they were Sikh and most folk don't even know any better. Oh, you got a turban on. That's the way we are in this country and right now you know the fact is we're probably worse off right now than we've ever been.

The racism is so high that Donald Trump said he wanted a wall on our Southern border just like the wall in Israel. That's what he said. The racist overtones, such as when he opens up an election he says, they are rapists and murderers. Okay, why not extortionists and pickpockets? The idea is that's an old racial paradigm. Rapists and murderers, white men get a hold of your white women and put them under protection because there is the brown bogeyman who's out there ready to rape them. That's an old historical paradigm that was used against black folks over and over again. We see that. The wall demonstrates that. Every time we turn around we're sort of struggling against these issues.

The last thing I want to say, maybe it's not the last thing I want to say but maybe. I'm a UCC preacher I'm not Baptist but I do know how to go on. Amen.

When we look at the words that are used, they really form a narrative. And a narrative can always distort our thinking unless we examine the narrative and what it means. Now narratives, understand this, narratives can be factual or fictitious. Or they can have an element of truth in them, but the truth is manipulated and distorted in such a way that it produces its own political webs. Its own ways in which we think about it. Most of us in this room I think grew up in that whole era of western TV shows and movies, and we saw those savage Native Americans that would just not let those white people on the frontier have their homes and be peaceful there. And they walked around and for no reason whatsoever they would scalp, they would kidnap, they would do all of this stuff and so they were the dangerous menace. Everybody I knew, nobody wanted to be an Indian everybody wanted to be a cowboy. When we find out years later the story was really opposite. That there were genocidal policies being carried out against native folk. And when there was reaction and fighting by native folk it was because native folk were trying to resist the genocidal policies that were being carried out against them, it was a narrative that was constructed and basically we bought in to that narrative.

We're buying into narrative all the time, when folks say, oh you gotta understand Israel exists in a bad neighborhood. They don't exist in my neighborhood. I'm in a bad neighborhood, and what I'm getting at is that also has racial overtones. Because we have a tendency in this country and around the world to think about the bad neighborhood is the place where people of color live and they're ready to pounce on you and rob you and take your car and take your life if necessary. All of those things continue to emerge. Continue to emerge. In Baltimore, the word that if you remember this, I think on CNN, she was asked couple days later, a city council member from Baltimore, and she was demanding, she says "why don't you call them thugs? That's what they are. Why don't you call them thugs?" Did y'all see that? Why don't you call them thugs. And finally the city council member in sheer frustration at being badgered by this woman, he said, "go ahead and call them what you want to call them. You want to call them nigger." He understood what the code language was and that's why he wasn't going to go there. That's why when I read thug growing up in Baltimore we knew it was black assailants, versus "toughs" who were just tough little white guys.

I want to say this, I want to say don't lose the hope. And don't lose the focus that we can actually be a part of making change in the world. I want it to be very clear, I don't want anybody to leave here, I am not against Israel. I am not against Israel. But I'm a strong supporter of Palestinian rights. Years ago when I was leading some preachers to Yale University and there was a picket line that emerged that morning and I said to the preachers I can't go across the picket line and they asked me and said how do you know who's right? And I said, well, these are building and grounds workers and janitors and that's Yale University, I don't need to know the issues to know where I stand. When people are being pushed around by a superpower and then another superpower it should be no question in your heart where you stand, who you stand with. You gotta stand for human rights, you gotta stand for dignity, you gotta stand for justice, you got to stand for what is right in the world. When folks stand up there and tell you it's too complicated. I had someone just recently, a Rabbi, every time I raised the question about Israel they said, well, it's too complicated for you to understand. I said to myself I'm gonna take that. And then I raised another question, he said, well it's too complicated for you to understand. I said to myself, 'two strikes'. And then I raised something and she said, it's really too complicated for you, I said wait a minute. I said is it too complicated because I'm black? Is it too complicated because you think I don't know what oppression looks like? Is it too complicated because I know who the underdog is? Is it too complicated because I saw a separation wall that separated people from human resources, from food and water and [the people are] controlled and regulated? Is it too complicated because everywhere I go I see checkpoints that are looking at people if they are Palestinian and pointing guns at their faces. Is it too complicated? It's not that complicated. Justice is not that complicated.

We gotta be the speakers and doers of justice. We gotta stand up for it. We gotta have hope in our hearts believing that yes it may take a little bit of time, but everything that is good has always taken a little bit of time. Let us continue to march up and stand up and let us continue to speak up and let us remember here tonight and always and I'm gonna end it this way, in Baltimore, and in Ferguson and all across this country, yes, Black Lives Matter, black lives matter I need to say that out loud because that is an affirmation that the rightwing cannot deal with, is that black lives matter. Why? Because you've been trying to strip us of dignity for too long. Black lives matter because I am human and I have my humanity that God has given to me, yes black lives matter and I'm gonna tell you that Palestinians lives matter as well. Palestinians lives and black lives they matter. And we're gonna continue to stand up for justice and make it happen in our time. God bless you.