

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE BLACK CHURCH? (Opinion, *The Community Informer*, Greenville, SC, June 11, 2014, 1A.)

For me, my concern is the declining social and political role of the Black Church in our world. There is not a time that I do not think about it. I think about it in my doctoral program, as a Black Church minister, as an educator, and most of all, as an African-American male whose life was positively impacted by the Black Church, having been raised by a father-minister-pastor and a devoted mother-pastor's wife. Hence, I come to you with an ultimate concern: what is happening to the Black Church?

I assert this inquiry based on a variety of observations. First, I am disturbed by the lesser role that the Black Church has played toward the goal of social justice in this age. Secondly, I am worried about our close-mindedness to allow questions and new ideas to help us understand our faith in God. Furthermore, I am saddened by the irrelevant arguments and pointless disputes that run rampant in our churches while the Black community is faced with many issues surrounding identity, crime, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, homelessness, broken homes, and more.

In other words, disorder, ignorance, lack of focus and interest, and complacency persist. Thus, I must ask a series of questions in order to move toward a progressive and lasting solution to this dilemma. First, what has caused the declining social role of the Black Church? Secondly, what would the Black Church need to embrace and reject to reclaim that role? And thirdly, what would provide continual influence for the Black Church to maintain this position?

Therefore, as I launch a series of thoughts regarding the Black Church, I invite you to join me on this journey with an open mind, a reflective soul, and an eager heart. This way, the Black Church can reclaim, recover, and redeem its role in our lives in the world as we work toward that goal together.