

HARRY R. JACKSON, JR.

A MANIFESTO

**CHRISTIAN AMERICA'S
CONTRACT WITH MINORITIES**



**WHITAKER
HOUSE**

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A MANIFESTO

Christian America’s Contract with Minorities

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SHARED DESTINY

When I was about eight years old, my family began taking me and my brother Eric on long trips from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Norfolk, Virginia. It's easily a nine- to eleven-hour drive. The roads and the terrain changed frequently, and so did our drivers to ensure the stress of the trip wasn't on one person alone.

Bathroom and food breaks were numerous, but we always arrived early in the evening, before sunset. We were joyfully greeted by Big Mama, our aunts, and scores of cousins and friends. Those summers were amazing. The food, fun, and fellowship were unparalleled.

My parents often drove back home after reconnecting with our huge extended family for only thirty-six hours, leaving me and Eric in Virginia for six to eight weeks annually. Those wonderful vacations enabled me and my brother to learn our family's narrative and aspirations, as well as where all *the bodies* were buried. To its credit, our family produced a chief justice on the Supreme Court of Virginia, nurses who ran city-wide departments, school principals, social workers, teachers, college professors, military personnel, FBI agents, real estate agents, and a few preachers.

In many ways, America today resembles my family back then. We need to think about minorities as being the precocious, ever-maturing children of a large family who are rapidly growing up. As they do so, they can help to drive our country to a better destination. Our goal for every minority group is full participation and full ownership of our values and the rights and privileges of our land.

A MANIFESTO FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

This book will set forth a biblical agenda or manifesto for social change in our nation. Christians of every denomination and ethnic stripe will be welcomed into our new coalition to add their proportional contribution to our national vision and strategic direction. We will continue to use the metaphor of a family traveling together in order to describe what we have to do to arrive at our family's destination safely and in good spirits.

Let me explain: most Christians believe that they have been invited into a fully functioning family. As we live out our values in the marketplace, we are called to influence the world in which we live.



*The mythic doctrine called the separation of church and state
has been both misunderstood and misapplied.*

For years, secular humanists and nonbelievers from every walk of life have been telling the church and its members to retreat back within the walls of our houses of worship. They have attempted to give us only freedom of worship *within* the

walls of the church, without freedom to express our beliefs and lifestyle outside those walls.

The mythic doctrine called *the separation of church and state* has been both misunderstood and misapplied. Our founders wanted to protect the church from government control. Instead, many anti-church crusaders envision an unfounded right to control the church's engagement in secular conversations about law, public policy, and culture.

I have written this work because the church is no longer living in our grandmothers' America. The *moral majority* can no longer be defined as a group of aging white men with iron-clad influence over its church members' thoughts, lifestyles, and social practices.

In 2018, William H. Frey's research clearly indicated that the U.S. would become "minority white" within the next twenty or twenty-five years. His statistics also point out that for youth, the post-millennial minority population under eighteen is expected to become the majority in 2020. The browning of America will be received with joy by many and fear by others. This demographic changes will affect fashion, industry, our engagement with media, and hundreds of nuances concerning how we live, love, and express ourselves in the years ahead.

Anyone who watches cable news or peruses social media will acknowledge the fact that both generational and ethnic tensions are rising. Frey makes a surprising declaration in his book, *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics are Remaking America*. He says, "The current period of profound racial change will lead to a less-divided nation than today's older whites or younger minorities fear."¹

How will such change be beneficial and unifying for America? And how will it help minorities? Obviously culture, music, and fashion will change as time and taste move forward. These demographic changes will also affect politics and political power.

As things are heating up for the 2020 elections and beyond, many political observers, including at least three major polling organizations, are reporting a surprising shift of African American voters away from the Democratic party. A similar trend is occurring among Hispanic and Asian voters as well. What's driving these changes? And if the predictions are correct, what will this mean for the minority communities and for the nation as a whole?

These are exactly the questions I am poised to address. But in order to do so, I must use a group of foundational moral, spiritual, and political assumptions, as well as some historical background, to give you the answers.

The first principle is that comparable belief systems and world views will produce unity. The Bible says, "How can two walk together unless they agree?" (See Amos 3:3.) Values agreement is a part of every premarital counseling process I'm aware of. Therefore, we are poised to see a minority demographic shift that, if followed by a unifying values shift, will produce a positive political vote shift.

TWO TERRIBLE BUMPS ON OUR JOURNEY

This winter and spring, two incredible moral bumps in the road have appeared that may affect our journey and must be included in our manifesto. The first bump in the road is the COVID-19 pandemic. The second bump is the terrible murders and public deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna

Taylor, and George Floyd, and the protests and rioting that followed.

Let's begin with the murders of blacks like George Floyd and others while in police custody. From the beginning, I advised the White House and the administration that Floyd's murder in Minneapolis would erupt into another wave of riots like those that occurred after the death of Michael Brown Jr. in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014. I advised both President Trump and Vice President Pence to address two separate messages to the nation. The first message primarily addressed to blacks that the administration feels their pain and will keep them safe, even when in police custody. The second message on law and order, I advised them, should be tempered because so-called law-and-order politicians from the 1950s onward were often anti-black. This message *must* include specific police reform changes as well.

My comments and suggestions are a part of the public record in the vice presidential listening session at my church in Maryland and the presidential listening session a week later in Dallas, Texas.



Collectively, the entire Christian community must speak to the hearts of minorities and say, "We love you, we cherish you, and there is a place for you in this land."

There is a full bodied history that is not known by most Christians. This book must be put in the hands of Christians of all ethnicities. Largely, this generation's whites feel shamed or blamed, instead of realizing that although they did not cause

these race problems, they have been entrusted with a divine moment in which they can make dramatic progress in healing the racial divide. Collectively, the entire Christian community must speak to the hearts of blacks and other minorities. We must say, "We love you, we cherish you, and there is a place for you in this land." Only Christians can heal the racial divide because we can truly speak heart to heart. I am recommending that a national prayer movement be ignited by the Reconciled Church movement and other allied prayer initiatives.

Many conservative whites don't seem to realize that blacks forty years old and under are engaged in protests because they are only six or seven generations away from slavery in which blacks were lynched and tortured.

SENATE APOLOGY FOR LYNCHINGS

I was in a closed-door session with five other national black leaders and U.S. Senator Bill Frist from Tennessee as he presented the concepts of Senate Resolution 39 of the 109th Congress, Apologizing to Lynching Victims and Their Descendants, which was signed into law in June 2005. Here is an excerpt of that historic legislation:

Whereas the crime of lynching succeeded slavery as the ultimate expression of racism in the United States following Reconstruction; whereas lynching was a widely acknowledged practice in the United States until the middle of the 20th century; whereas lynching was a crime that occurred throughout the United States, with documented incidents in all but 4 States; whereas at least 4,742 people, predominantly African-Americans, were reported lynched in the United States between 1882 and 1968; whereas 99 percent of

all perpetrators of lynching escaped from punishment by State or local officials; whereas lynching prompted African-Americans to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and prompted members of B'nai B'rith to found the Anti-Defamation League;...

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Senate--

(1) apologizes to the victims of lynching for the failure of the Senate to enact anti-lynching legislation;

(2) expresses the deepest sympathies and most solemn regrets of the Senate to the descendants of victims of lynching, the ancestors of whom were deprived of life, human dignity, and the constitutional protections accorded all citizens of the United States; and

(3) remembers the history of lynching, to ensure that these tragedies will be neither forgotten nor repeated.

WHY POLICE BRUTALITY HITS HOME

For blacks and other minorities, brutality and death in police custody is the new lynching. They feel as though these acts are the height of dehumanization.

I wish I had branded an alternative phrase to Black Lives Matter years ago. I would have simply rephrased it to *Black People's Lives Count* or *All Black Lives Matter*.

Unfortunately, many conservative whites begin to compare the black deaths over a weekend in Chicago with the number of blacks who die at the hands of the police in urban areas. Often, blacks feel that this kind of analysis is not genuine. It's a game of *blame the victim*. It's not an apples to apples comparison. Black abortions matter, black urban murders

matter, black over-incarceration matters (the new Jim Crow laws), black under-education matters, black fatherlessness matters, and black wealth matters.

Many frustrated African Americans say that every time we accumulate wealth, the white power brokers take it away from us. They cite the massacre at the Black Wall Street near Tulsa in 1921. In that incident alone, one hundred and fifty to three hundred black men were killed or lynched, and their businesses and homes were razed to the ground.

The history and strategies set forth in this book encompass my humble attempt to shine a light in the darkness. From the treehouse to the house on Elm Street, there must be biblical clarity. From the ghetto to the White House, there must be moral authority. From the slums to the suburbs, there must be a way up the socioeconomic ladder.

UNITY OF THOUGHT CREATES ADVANCEMENT

I played on a state championship football team made up of blacks and whites, but we competed in a part of my state that was very racist and filled with Ku Klux Klan followers. I remember the team bus pulling up to a school fifty miles outside of Cincinnati, Ohio, the town in which I was raised. There were signs saying that blacks were not allowed. These crude signs actually used the graphic “N” word. The crowd carrying the signs was loud, rude, and filled with hate-filled rhetoric.

My team was comprised of undersized, rich, white kids with one outsized black kid—me. We exited the bus despite the challenge of the crowd. By the end of the game, we had won by a margin of over fifty points. That’s right—fifty points.

Clear game strategies and excellent conditioning allowed us to defeat mean-spirited teams of all stripes. We overcame stereotypes and physically superior individual athletes.

Our team won because of hard work in practices and a unified strategy executed under the watchful eye of a visionary coach. We were undefeated two years in a row and became first place in our division my senior year.

Minorities in America have the same kind of opportunity that my high school football team had. Believe it or not, we can unite, strategize, and help advance the nation...if we come together. The major question is, who will be the coach? Who will lead the way?

We need a cadre of leaders who rise up in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Of necessity, they have to be multi-ethnic, self-sacrificing, and insightful enough to anticipate the future.

During the civil rights movement, black clergy courageously led the way. They believed that a media event would be used by the Holy Spirit to convict the majority culture of non-Christian standards and values. They believed that all Americans believed in the high-sounding goals and vision articulated in both the Bible and the nation's Constitution. They sought to reform the American culture and cause a *civil revival* that reached far beyond the church house into the streets, the homes, and the hearts of the individual citizens of the nation.

Black reformers cannot lead national change alone. Today, we must add the interests of Hispanic, Asian, and other young adult voters' concerns. The nation's Christian faith and common sense are still our greatest unifiers. In the first Great Awakening that swept across our thirteen colonies between

the 1730s and 1740s, there was an emphasis on personal spiritual renewal that produced societal change at a grassroots level. This movement almost singlehandedly promoted the ideas of human dignity, equality, and the abolition of slavery. This revival movement permanently transformed Protestantism and the emerging U.S. culture. Minorities must no longer see ourselves as victims but victors who will raise the level of biblical righteousness and justice in America.



*Minorities must no longer see ourselves as victims
but victors who will raise the level of biblical righteousness
and justice in America.*

In this hour of social media, smart phones, and selfies, a grassroots movement may be easier than ever to kindle and maintain. All we lack are leaders armed with a manifesto, a new coalition of spiritual leaders who are held together by common sense, biblical values, and a set of easy-to-accomplish political goals that can once again *awaken* America.

This work outlines a nine-point moral and political agenda that can be used to unite the hearts, minds, and values of our nation's minorities. Naturally, able men and women must hear the call and rise to lead.

This manifesto can easily be remembered through an acrostic using the word *empowered*.

EMPOWERED

- ♦ Education Reform

- ✦ Marriage Rebuilding as a Social Strategy
- ✦ Public Policy Reform
- ✦ Oversight of Minority and Community Engagement
- ✦ Wealth Creation
- ✦ Entrepreneurship
- ✦ Righteousness and Justice as Moral Guidelines
- ✦ Empathy versus Retaliation
- ✦ Destiny with Dignity for All Humankind

Let's address these nine points, one by one. Our goal in becoming *empowered* is to benefit our culture and refashion our society on the anvil of solid Christian truth. This can be the ultimate win-win as opposed to a carnal power grab. There is more than enough division and polarization going on.

Education Reform

Education reforms have been attempted by the last few presidential administrations. These have seemed to lurch back and forth, resulting in surface changes only. Studies repeatedly show a gap between majority and minority reading and math levels by the third grade. What is needed today is an educational solution that will level the playing field.



*Past education reforms have seemed to lurch back and forth,
resulting in surface changes only.*

America seeks to be a meritocracy, with a government run by people based on their talents and abilities rather than their

ancestry or wealth. Education properly dispensed can create such a society.

During my forty years as a pastor, I have seen minorities sacrifice for the next generation by sending their children to private or religious schools. My own father sent me to the excellent Cincinnati Country Day School, Williams College, and Harvard Business School. He and my mother, an elementary school teacher, believed that climbing the educational ladder was essential for blacks to mainstream and overcome barriers of advancement.

Some Necessary Reforms

Here are some necessary public reforms to improve our educational system:

- ✦ Charter schools
- ✦ Private religious and character-based education through third grade
- ✦ After-school and faith-based tutorial centers located in churches
- ✦ Mentoring programs for college-bound minority males because of high dropout rates
- ✦ Religious-based thirteenth year programs
- ✦ Military service and trade school training for kids who are not college-bound
- ✦ Public policies and grants developed for effective Christian schools
- ✦ Encouragement of minority kids to pursue advanced and professional school degrees

Marriage Rebuilding as a Social Strategy

Churches must work with families to create a marriage culture.

Public Policy Reform

There are three dimensions of public policies that minorities must continue to advocate for.

Criminal Justice Reform

The First Step Act, signed into law by President Trump on December 21, 2018, must be continued. According to the Board of Prisons, the act was designed “to reduce the size of the federal prison population while also creating mechanisms to maintain public safety.” The six major areas the Bureau of Prison (BOP) highlights as the achievements of the First Step Act are:

- 1. Reduction in Recidivism**
- 2. Incentives for Success** (good time credit for every year)
- 3. Confinement** (provision to house inmates within 500 driving miles of their residence)
- 4. Correctional Reforms**

These include: prohibition on the use of restraints on pregnant inmates in the custody of BOP and the U.S. Marshals Service; a requirement for the BOP “to provide tampons and sanitary napkins that meet industry standards to prisoners for free and in a quantity that meets the health care needs of each prisoner”; and prohibition against the use of solitary confinement for juvenile delinquents in federal custody. BOP does not house juveniles in its facilities but its contracts comply with this aspect of the First Step Act.

5. Sentencing Reforms

This includes changes to mandatory minimum sentences for certain drug offenders. The First Step Act made the provisions of the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-220) retroactive so that currently incarcerated offenders who received longer sentences for possession of crack cocaine versus powder cocaine can submit a petition in federal court to have their sentences reduced.

6. Expanding the Safety Valve

The act also expands the safety valve provision, which allows courts to sentence low-level, nonviolent drug offenders with minor criminal histories to less than the required mandatory minimum for an offense.

The act requires the submission of several reports to review the BOP's implementation of the law and assess the effects of the new risk and needs assessment system.

Oversight of Minority and Community Engagement

This area speaks of the need for specific strategic engagement in the local political process. Minority participation on platform committees and at political conventions will be essential for true political empowerment. Currently, minority opinions are simply ignored because of a lack of participation. The kind of leadership needed here is less like charismatic Dr. King and more like political action committees, regional get-out-the-vote efforts, and a myriad of tactical approaches to political engagement.

Wealth Creation

The foundational building block of personal wealth in the U.S. is home ownership. An apartment dweller only transfers

a few thousand dollars to the next generation. Homeowners, however, pass on more than \$150,000 of next generation equity. Black home ownership was at a 42 percent level in 2017, according to the Urban Institute. The gap between black and white home ownership that year was 30 percent.

Interestingly, the home ownership gap between blacks and whites in the U.S. is bigger today than it was in 1960, when 38 percent of blacks and 65 percent of whites owned homes. In those days, it was legal to discriminate and to refuse to sell homes to minorities in certain communities. It's a shame that in the decades since the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, this wealth gap still exists.

According to the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals, the Hispanic home ownership rate in 2017 was 46.2 percent, just a bit higher than the rate for the black community. Asians, however, had home ownership rates comparable to whites. Nonetheless, they do not have equal access. "Many Asian households tend to live in multigenerational households at a higher rate, and it shows up as a higher homeownership rate," explains Gary Painter, a public policy professor at the University of South California.²

Additionally, the 2017 American Community Survey reported that Asian homeowners are often required to pay higher down payments than other ethnic groups—sometimes as high as 35 percent.

Entrepreneurship

When I was growing up, older blacks told stories about the number of black businesses that existed in their community. Unfortunately, as segregation shrank, it seems that the celebration of black businesses also shrank. My grandfather was raised knowing how to farm and quit school after

the second grade. After he moved from South Carolina to Cincinnati, Ohio, he started a construction business that gave about twenty-five people a sense of purpose and mission in life, along with a pay check. After he became a Christian, he led his business according to the principles of the Word of God. Our minority community need millions of business leaders who can serve their communities in like manner.



Our minority community need millions of business leaders who can serve their communities guided by the Word of God.

According to the 2015 U.S. Census, there were 8 million minority-owned businesses in the United States. The 21st-century question for minority businesses is, “How many of these entities see themselves as instruments of social change?” And a follow-up question could be, “Can U.S. minorities follow the example of the Republic of Israel, which is the international leader of startup businesses, despite centuries’ long discrimination?”

It will take major changes in funding and venture capital resources to fuel the growth of small businesses with an international vision. Job creation and community revitalization can be achieved through the growth and prosperity of minority businesses. Both political parties must be challenged to offer greenhouse programs that will aid in the planting and development of such growth.

Righteousness and Justice as Moral Guidelines

In late 2004, I burst onto the national scene as a social commentator. At that time, I was one of the few black conservatives who were featured on cable news networks. I began to realize then that the Christian community was deeply divided on their political engagement based on a simple paradigm.



The Christian community is divided into two camps: those seeking biblical justice and those advocating for righteousness.

As black Christians, we're very interested in biblical justice, advocacy for the poor, and ministry to the disadvantaged in our culture. Some social scientists have even gone so far as to declare that minorities cannot be racists because of their lack of power, position, and generational wealth.

White evangelicals, on the other hand, have consistently advocated for what I call righteousness issues that involve personal responsibility. These include traditional marriage, the rights of the unborn, and seeking prohibitions on things like gambling.

I realized that the Bible actually presents both righteousness and justice issues as valid moral concerns. My eyes were opened to the fact that the nation needed a balance of morally engaged citizens who saw things through both lenses—righteousness and justice. In fact, I began to proclaim the words of Psalm 89:14–17:

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are

those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they celebrate your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn.

Mature Christians should advocate both for life for the unborn and criminal justice reform. We should care for widows and orphans and also protect traditional heterosexual marriage.

Empathy versus Retaliation

At the Congressional prayer breakfast on February 6, 2020, I sat as one of nearly 4,000 participants from 120 nations and heard a powerful prophetic message from Arthur C. Brooks. He is a devout believer, conservative thought leader, and author of a book entitled *Love Your Enemies*.³ His speech called for outrageous, Christ-like love to invade our personal, public, and political arenas.

Unfortunately, most of the audience, myself included, was thinking about how much their family, friends, and enemies needed to hear this word. Many Sunday mornings, we sit in judgment of others while nursing our personal wounds, instead of applying the Scriptures to ourselves.

As an African American, I have often been guilty of pointing my self-righteous, accusing forefinger at others. I often forget that there are more fingers pointing back at me than I point at others. All minorities, especially blacks, will have to exercise forgiveness in order to find personal healing and healing of our nation's public wounds and sins.

Perhaps one of the most needed arenas of forgiveness is the area of ethnic tensions. In Matthew 24, Jesus says that in

the last days, ethnic groups will rise up against each other in real tribal war. Only the church has the ability to rise above the cultural rifts of gender, class, and ethnicity. The great apostle Paul states this truth: “*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28).

Destiny with Dignity for All Humankind

Made in the image and likeness of God in our moral, spiritual, and intellectual essence, all of us have the right to fulfill our destinies with dignity. Endowed with unique characteristics bestowed on us by our Creator, it’s within our nature to act in accordance with His will, which is to choose good over evil, to love Him and each other.

GETTING TO OUR DESTINATION

Now that we have articulated our Christian manifesto, we must start the process of getting everyone on the same page concerning our destination. Where do we want our American culture to land? Do we want to be a socialistic country or a capitalistic nation? What should be the financial opportunities? What should health care look like?

These are destiny questions. As a child, I never realized that the reason my family took us to Norfolk each summer was a rite of passage. They wanted us to relate to our highly motivated and close-knit family. They chose Norfolk because our matriarch and patriarch lived there: Big Mama and my grandfather Reverend Davis.

Reverend Davis was a joyful former prizefighter with arms as big as some men’s legs. When we stayed in his house during the summer, every Sunday was a mixture of joyful worship at

the country church he pastored and joyful family fellowship over the weekly feast called Sunday dinner. I can still smell the hot buttered rolls and sweet potato pie. And I remember the stories, the discussions, and the prayers that we shared around the table. These times helped me become more than a Cincinnati ghetto dweller. I became a full-fledged Jackson as I spent time in Norfolk. My summer eventually affected my destiny. If we had stayed in Cincinnati every summer, I would have become a different person.

So the next question we Christians have to ask ourselves is, "Where do we want to train our growing family?" It's time to choose the location of our family vacation. What spiritual, political, and social destination do we wish to reach? In this generation, Christian leaders must write a new Christian manifesto or declaration of values. People like Francis Schaeffer, James Dobson, Chuck Colson, Billy Graham, and host of others produced seminal works in years gone by. The EMPOWERED acrostic is simply my attempt to create a new understanding of vision.

Christians must remember that we have a shared destiny, but in the next chapter, we need to decide where we are going to spend our summers. We need to decide what our family's values are going to be and what it means to be an engaged believer in the generations to come.