



# BUILDING RACE RELATIONSHIPS

*A conversation on racial and cultural differences, poverty, and the ways we all can help the poorest among us*

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# UNITE INDY

## BUILDING RACE RELATIONSHIPS

Welcome to a conversation about Indianapolis, about race relations, about poverty. Welcome to an educational opportunity, one that will lead you into an understanding you may never have had before about our neighbors and the quietly desperate lives that many of them live.

It's time Indianapolis was known for something other than it's monuments and museums. It's time we were known for the unity of our people, the care that we have for those who need help, the bridges we build between neighborhoods, and the doors that are open for everyone who knocks.

Here is a conversation in three parts. You'll hear from a former gang member, a black business man, and a panel of some of the most knowledgeable people working in our city today. What can you do to help the hopeless? You can start by reading this, a forum held at Crossroads Bible College on March 16, 2017.\*

Don't let this conversation end with you. You can help start a much-needed dialog. When you finish reading this magazine, please pass it on to another.

\*Text has been edited for length and clarity.



Russ Daniels, UNITE INDY, and DeWayne Fincher, a freshman at Crossroads Bible College

# A RACE RELATIONS FORUM

## INTRODUCTION

**DR. WARE:** Good evening! My name is Charles Ware. I'm the President of Crossroads Bible College, and we're delighted to be able to host this event. Our mission at Crossroads Bible College is to train Christian leaders to reach a multiethnic urban world. So we are delighted to be able to participate in UNITE INDY's forum on Race Relations and to work with Jim Cotterill.

Jim came to Indy to attend Butler University, where he met his wife, Nancy. You may know them from the time they spent at the *Indianapolis Business Journal*, or when Jim served for almost a decade as President of the National Christian Foundation Indiana.

Today he and Nancy are busy as the founders of UNITE INDY, an organization mobilizing Christ followers to bridge racial differences, to lift up our urban neighbors, and to support the charities that serve them. He now has the title he's most proud of: Chief Unity Officer. But I want to say this about Jim: What he's doing is hard work. Any of you who have been involved in it knows it takes a lot of patience and yields its share of disappointments and failures. But he's willing to persevere to that end.

**JIM COTTERILL:** Thank you, Charles. To add to what Charles said, UNITE INDY is really a result of a calling on my life. I learned several years ago in a not-so-pleasant situation to pay attention to the things I know come from God. So I'd say about two years ago now, I had a pretty clear word that I was to see what I could do to help those in our city who were living in poverty and crime-ridden areas. I got ahold of 20 or so friends of mine who were serving in various ministries and churches around the city and just said, "If you have any interest in the idea of city transformation, please join us. I'll pay for lunch."

Well, lunch got a little expensive because about 40 people showed up. I realized at that first meeting that there was some kind of power that was coalescing around this idea. We were ready to do...something.

In a metropolitan arena that boasts a world-famous race track, big, beautiful, new hotels, and world class conventions, most people here are unaware of the poor, homeless and hungry that live only a few blocks off Meridian Street, and we knew we could do better.

Meanwhile, Greg Strand, of Str8Up Ministries, had organized

a group to pray for the city. In each of those meetings, Greg would give us a couple Bible verses to kind of meditate on. One day I found myself asking "Okay God, where do I fit into this? What is it you want me to do?" And what I heard loud and clear was "Get off the sidelines and jump in."

So I started to put together a plan forged with the help of people from around the country who were already doing city transformational work. At the end of January, 2017, after 10 years at NCF [National Christian Foundation] Indiana, I left the organization I had headed since its inception and the next day, February 1st, Nancy and I started UNITE INDY.

Simply put, UNITE INDY exists to bring hope to the hopeless in our community. And we're going to do that in a number of different ways.

One of the most important parts of city transformation is to develop an army of Christians and others of good will to serve in the areas of the inner city that need the most help right now. Every other city with transformational success has done this. In Indianapolis, the public safety department outlined six neighborhoods that have the highest crime

# UNITE INDY

*Introduction continued*

and poverty rates. We will target those initially.

Secondly, we will work to connect suburban churches with urban churches, ministries and schools to build relationships with people who have felt abandoned. These are our brothers and sisters. They're the people that we're commanded to love. And although we talk a lot about it, it is often hard to know what to do about it. So, this forum is a first step.

Anyone who has ever gone on a mission trip to the other side of the ocean will tell you it is pretty helpful to go through some kind of cultural sensitivity training. That's normal. People with different backgrounds have differing behavioral expectations. So, we put together a panel of the best of the best servants in our city and inner city to unpack cultural differences for us.

It isn't even a racial thing, it's really a cultural thing of how we grow up and what advantages we had that we really never thought much about. So that's really why we're here tonight. It's not only to learn how people approach things from their own perspective based on their own life experiences, but, also, to become sensitized to other's view points so that we can build honest relationships with them. We need to ask questions. We need to listen. And we need to really attempt to understand.

## A LIFE CHANGED

So, I'm happy to introduce Russ Daniels, Chief Strategy Officer with UNITE INDY. He has with him an impressive young man, DeWayne Fincher, who has shaken off the shackles of gang membership and drug use and now lives a changed life.

**RUSS DANIELS:** DeWayne, it's a pleasure to be with you.

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Yeah, thank you. It's nice to be with you, too, Russ.

**RUSS DANIELS:** You had your 20th birthday in February; right? And I know that you've taken a couple of courses here at Crossroads Bible College.

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Yes, February 5th. And Yes. I'm a freshman here at Crossroads.

**RUSS DANIELS:** Now, I know about five years ago your life was pretty different, wasn't it?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Yeah, it was tough. I grew up at 42nd and Arlington with my dad. He and my mom was never married, and they were separated when I was born—well, before I was born. So it was rough growing up without a mother and a father being in the same home.

**RUSS DANIELS:** Of course, and you were exposed to some of the really bad opportunities that are available for young people, those became part of your life, didn't they?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Yeah. I didn't have a lot of money growing up, we were pretty poor. My mom was in and out of shelters. My dad was a truck driver, so my grandparents really raised me. And they didn't have a lot of money either. We didn't even have a working shower. I got made fun of in school because I smelled. It was just—I got bullied a whole lot in elementary.

**RUSS DANIELS:** Were you involved in church growing up?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** No. I knew of church. Like, we went Easter and Christmas, you know, we got invited by a family member, but I didn't grow up in church.

**RUSS DANIELS:** And then, you had an interesting transformation, didn't you?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Yeah, my friend Joseph invited me to this thing called CRU [Campus Crusade for Christ]. It was called Student Adventure. It was after baseball practice in high school, and he asked me if I wanted to come. It was like a Bible study. I said, "No. I'm not with all of that. I'll just go home." He said, "There's going to be some food and a ride back home too." So I ended up going, and it was different. I didn't know there was Christians in my school.

**RUSS DANIELS:** And what happened from there?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** I had to switch schools and go to John Marshall. And I wasn't part of CRU for a while until I saw the campus minister again, C.J. Neal, and I got excited. I'm, like, "All right. CRU is going to be here too."

So I went to CRU there. But I ended up leaving because something was happening in my life with my family. And when I left, Joseph and C.J. Neal kept in contact with me through Facebook. They made sure they would keep in contact, even though I would never respond. I didn't want to know about God at all because what happened in my life. But I ended up coming back to CRU my junior year. And that's when I heard the Lord telling me to go to church on one specific Wednesday.

**RUSS DANIELS:** That's a pretty amazing story.

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Well, I was involved heavily in drugs and gang violence. So I'm originally GD, which is Gangster Disciples. I was the guy you didn't want to see on the streets that was angry. I used to sell drugs. I never shot nobody, though. But I came close because I got robbed, too, as well, while I was selling drugs. So while I was doing my drugs and gang-banging, I was going to make my first robbery. And I'm 16 at the time. This is my junior year. We were poor, and we didn't know where we was going to go next and I got tired of not having any money. So I was going to make my first robbery, me and my boys. And for three days straight I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep; I couldn't do anything. Then for some reason at study hall, I heard "Go to Bible study. Go to church."

**RUSS DANIELS:** Just in your mind?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Just in my mind. And I'm just, like, "I don't want to go to church." Because they're all judgmental. They judged us as a family because we didn't have clothes. When we went, we got made fun of. You know, they gave us mean looks. It wasn't, like, loving at all. So I didn't want to go. But I decided to go. I don't know why. My my mom was, like, "Where are you going?" "I'm about to go to church." And then

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I was the guy you didn't want to see on the streets that was angry. I used to sell drugs. I never shot nobody, though. But I came close because I got robbed, too, as well, while I was selling drugs" —DeWayne Fincher



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I just left because they didn't really care what I did.

So I walked—I walked to church thinking, "If they judge me, I'm going to fight this pastor, and I'm going to shoot this church up if they judge me." And I walked inside the building. They look at me. And then the pastor kept on teaching. I sat down. And after the service I talked to the pastor, and I told him, "Look, I'm not going to stop gang-banging. I'm not going to stop having sex. I'm not going to stop drugs. I'm not going to stop smoking. None of that." I'm like, "I'm just not going to stop it. So this is me, and this is who I am." He's just says, "All right. Keep coming." And that was the end of the conversation. So I kept coming every Wednesday and also going back to CRU every Tuesday.

**RUSS DANIELS:** And so, did it take a little period of time before God got ahold of your life?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Not really. It took only a few months. The pastor invited me to a Sunday church service, and I told him, "I'm not with that," because of my experience of being judged as a kid. I told him, "No, I'm cool. I'm going to just stay in Bible study." And then one particular night, it was April 4th, 2014, and I walked in and there was a full-blown choir, the pastor with a suit on. They're praising. I walked in the church and just walked straight back out. I told him, "I don't want to do none of this." But I'd already walked up there, so I stayed, and I felt it pressing on me at the altar call to come up and surrender my life to Christ. And that's what I did. I surrendered my life to Christ and got saved at the age of 17. And I got baptized May 10th, a month after that.

**RUSS DANIELS:** And then there was a point in time when there was a big period of your growing and your commitment to God and being turned around. Tell me about that.

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** C.J. Neal, the one that is the campus CRU minister, he made sure that I didn't stray away in the summer, because the summer gets hot. You've got females. You've got temptations. All that. So he made sure I didn't go back to my lifestyle. He told me about this internship on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. We'd be reading the Bible and all this stuff—It wasn't appealing to me. Because I'm like, "That sounds boring." And, plus, it's Friday and Saturday. That's when I'm going to being getting busy. But I ended up saying "yes" the last day of CRU, me and my buddy, who I just brought to CRU, which was the last day, we both committed, me and him. And it was over the summer I learned how to pray. I learned how to study my Bible. I learned how to be a servant in church, and just be a servant altogether. It was a life-changing experience for me to learn more about God and about who He sees me to be.

**RUSS DANIELS:** That's phenomenal. And now, as you're talking to people, how do conversations generally go?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Well, now the conversation is, when they come up to me, and they're having a bad day, I know I can help, because wherever I am, that's where the church is because Christ is inside of me. And I just believe wholeheartedly that I can do greater works, because that's what He says in His Bible. So when somebody is having a bad day, I ask

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### *A Life Changed continued*

them if I can pray for them. And then I'll pray for them there.

I met a lady that had cancer. I prayed for her to have time—prayed for her, specifically, at my job. And it's just like seeing people rejoice and be surprised: “Dang, he wants to pray for me?” Like, “What does this kid want to do?” Because when people see me, they see my dreadlocks and they see that I'm black. And they get scared of me until I open my mouth and share with them the love of Christ that Christ shared with me. So I can't judge anybody that judges me off the bat because of my appearance. That's what Christ had to show me.

**RUSS DANIELS:** Amen. So you're working now, working two jobs and planning coming back to school next fall? And God's got his hand on your life?

**DeWAYNE FINCHER:** Yes. God has been—God is amazing. He really transformed my whole life. This is my life. This is who I am.

**JIM COTTERILL:** Thank you Russ and thank you DeWayne. Your story is an impressive one, and helps us to understand the direction we need to go. Your testimony leads us to a friend of mine who will further expand our understanding, let me introduce a man I met in a Bible study.

## HEAD TO HEAD

Brishon Bond and I were away on an annual retreat with our Bible study group at a beautiful little lake in Southern Indiana. All morning the day we were to go home, my eyes just kept being drawn to him. Now, I know he's a good-looking guy, but he's not that handsome. Then it became pretty clear to me, that I was hearing, “You need to get to know this guy.”

So, pretty soon thereafter we met at lunch and right away we started having a conversation about the very issue that we're talking about tonight. We talked about kinds of phrases and meanings of things like “black lives matter” and “white privilege” and started to get an idea about how differently black people and white people feel about terms such as those.

**BRISHON BOND:** Well, he's correct. He did come up to me out of the clear blue sky and say, “Hey, I wanted to talk to you a little bit.” And so over that lunch we kind of unpacked a few things. One of the things that's most important whenever you're having these kind of discussions is to be honest. Conversations like these are going to be a bit uncomfortable. And while you might not want to hunker down in your ideological bubble and throw grenades at each other, to get real understanding, you have to have some conversations that may make you squirm a little bit. At the end of the day, however, you walk away with a deeper understanding and a bit of

an ability to relate to people on the other side of the fence.

So the easiest way for us to do that in the short of amount time that we have here today, is just to talk about a few terms, some things that Jim and I discussed together. One that you always hear, is “white privilege.” When I first mentioned that to Jim—well, you can tell me what you thought.

**JIM COTTERILL:** Yeah, because I think the hair stood up on the back of my neck just a little bit. And I kind of bristled at it. I'm sure I was a little bit defensive at first, and thought, you know, “What do you mean ‘privileged?’” I grew up in probably a middle-class, maybe even a lower-middle-class family. And so I was thinking, “We didn't have a lot of money.” I never considered myself privileged at all. I worked all my life since I was a young kid, and earned everything I had. I just didn't feel like “white privilege” applied to me in any way. It made me feel resentful to be judged like that.

**BRISHON BOND:** Yep, yep. And that's the response that I get most times is, “Well, show me where my privilege is.” “What do I get as a result of my whiteness that you don't have?” And the easiest way for me to explain it metaphorically is that [one of our panel members, a member of the Indianapolis Police Department] Commander Burton has on a

bulletproof vest. And you can think of white privilege in the sense of Kevlar—intellectual Kevlar. Right? Kevlar is the material that bullet-proof vests are made out of. White privilege kind of works in the same way. It sort of insulates you from the realities of life that other people, who have grown up in very different situations, deal with every day. I like to use the example of being north of 96th Street here in Indianapolis. There's a whole different world of experiences north of 96th Street. And that world—not that it's bad or good—it's just a world that's totally different from the experiences of the inner city, and if you've never realized that, you could live your whole life never understanding anything that an African American goes through, living in a white society. Without that understanding, your life would be no different, certainly your life would be no worse. But that's the essence of privilege. It is the ability to go through life without ever having to consider or worry or think about understanding people who don't look like you.

**JIM COTTERILL:** Now, I get it. When I talk with people who have grown up with no dad, and not even knowing who their father was—maybe their mother was a drug addict, or aunt, or their grandmother raised them with little money, I realized, “I never had to deal with any of that.”

**BRISHON BOND:** You know, I tell people all the time in my neighborhood, when I go out and do cardio or exercise—my girlfriend's here, and she'll tell you that I don't do too much cardio—(Laughter) but the times when I do go out for a run, I make it a conscious effort not to carry my wallet in my hand; right? Not to have my phone in any hand at night because someone might think it's a weapon. And simply because of the climate that we live in, I'm fearful that a wallet in my hand, or my phone in my hand, could be

misinterpreted by the wrong person, and I could get hurt.

Now, when I tell that story to my white brothers, the first thing that they say is, “My God, Brishon. I never thought about that.” That's white privilege. That is the essence of white privilege. That you could go through life and never even have to consider that I need to put my registration on my visor in my car so that I don't have to reach into my glove compartment to get it. That while I walk with my phone or my wallet in my pocket I can never



reach for it without being concerned that it could be misinterpreted as a gun. And when you hear the reaction from somebody who is not African-American who says, “My God, I never thought about that,” there you have what white privilege is in a nutshell.

**JIM COTTERILL:** So I guess that leads us to probably one of the most difficult to explain terms: “Black Lives Matter.” I know when I heard that, what I thought of immediately was the whole idea of the militant rioters in Baltimore that were destroying property and basically scaring the nation. They were marching in the streets and saying, “Pigs in a blanket. Fry ‘em like bacon” and “What do we want? Dead cops.” So it just gives me really bad feelings. And the other thing that I felt was that *all* lives matter. And blue lives matter. So why don't we just say, “All lives matter,” and then really stick to it.

**BRISHON BOND:** I hear you. The best way for me to describe the Black Lives Matter movement—and, yeah, I brought props. On my wrist I have a Black Lives Matter bracelet because I'm a member of the local Black Lives Matter. But I also have a pink ribbon. Anybody who sees a pink ribbon automatically knows that it is a symbol for breast cancer. If you see somebody wearing a pink ribbon, you wouldn't go up to them and ask, “Don't you care about prostate cancer?” Or “Aren't you concerned about pancreatic cancer?” That would be silly.

Obviously, they care about other kinds of cancer. And if they could wave a magic wand, they would get rid of all cancers. But for whatever reason they feel the need right now to pay special attention to breast cancer.

That same ideology, pretty much, is what Black Lives Matter symbolizes. Following the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida, three women formed this organization, not because there was any other life that didn't matter, but to be focused at that point in time on things that were happening to young men and women of color in America. I have to tell you that it isn't anti-law enforcement. I love these guys [speaking to policemen who were present]. I'll see y'all at the High Five Rally next week. It's not—it's not anything that has any type of hate or disregard for any other life. But it is, quite frankly and unapologetically, a movement that insists on equality and social justice for all, and a specific focus on law enforcement and their interactions with people of color.

**JIM COTTERILL:** Also, in my mind it has been co-opted by a group that has a more militant agenda.

**BRISHON BOND:** Yeah. And to answer that, you know, I will tell you that I'm heavily, heavily into politics. And a few years ago when the Tea Party first came on the scene, they were characterized by many as a racist organization —among other things. So I took it upon myself to go downtown to a Tea Party rally and actually talk with some of the thousands of people there.

Now, while I can tell you that there's probably nothing in the Tea Party that I agree with politically, what I can tell you emphatically is that it is not a racist organization. There were people in the organization that the media focused on who may have fit a certain profile, and if you focus on them and you've never actually interacted with anybody else in the Tea Party, then they're going to shape the narrative of who and what the Tea Party is.

Well, I think that same thing is happening with Black Lives Matter. I think that there have been individuals who have said the most hateful things. And the news media zooms in on them and gives the whole movement a bad image.

I can tell you that if I was there, they would not be yelling, "Pigs in a blanket, Fry them like bacon." And they would not be yelling anything that's anti-law enforcement or calling for violence against anyone. That's counterproductive to what we're trying to do.

**JIM COTTERILL:** And if I hadn't had you as a friend, I don't know that I would have really understood that. So I appreciate it. Thank you my friend. Thanks for sharing your insights and letting us understand what may be a different perspective than what we have had.

Russ Daniels always says he likes to hear conversations that generate light rather than heat. And I think we just had one.

So, now let me introduce Nancy Cotterill, who is the co-founder of **UNITE INDY**. She's been my partner in life, in marriage, in parenting, in grand-parenting, and in business and ministry for 47 years.

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“Today, I think we've moved from gangs to guns. A gang is not as important to join if I can get a gun. Then I can protect myself.”

— David Hampton

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## RACE RELATIONSHIP FORUM

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Thank you! Just to give you a little background: When Jim was sharing his plans for **UNITE INDY** with Darryl Webster, who pastors Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church at 30th and Sherman, Pastor Darryl said to him, “You know, Jim, you can plan and discuss this forever. But while you guys are talking about this in your gated communities up north, we've got houses on fire here.” He was, of course, referring to the terrible conditions present in our poorest neighborhoods.

It's important to note that although most poor people are white and not black, Indianapolis has an inner city that is primarily black. Also, where middle-class blacks and whites often have close relationships because they share many or most cultural attributes, there remains a double culture shock between the black person who lives in poverty and the middle-class white volunteer. So how do we build race relationships?

I think the first step is to understand the problems. We will look at what is working, and then, we can, together, reach an idea of what we can do to help. To that end, we're especially honored to introduce this panel of leaders who operate in the trenches every day.

To my left is **Commander Phillip Burton**, who's the downtown commander of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD). He is a law enforcement

veteran of 27 years. He has worked as the assistant commander of the Homeland Security Bureau. And he's also a mentor and a motivational speaker for youth and young men. Next is **Toby Miller**, who is president of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committees' Race & Cultural Relations Leadership Network, which fosters positive relationships among diverse groups in response to crisis issues. On his left is **Cindy Palmer**. She is the co-founder of Kaleo, a women's ministry, and founder of Heart Change Ministry, that serves, trains, and employs mothers in crisis. And she is also founder of Covenant Community Housing, which provides housing for those women in the Brookside community. To her left is **Dr. David Hampton**, Pastor of Light of the World Christian Church and Deputy Mayor of Indianapolis in the area of neighborhood engagement. And then, to his left is **Dr. Charles Ware**, our host this evening, President of Crossroads Bible College, and author of the book “One Race One Blood.” Dr. Ware is a nationally-known speaker and consultant on racial reconciliation and leadership. Please welcome our panelists!

My first question is for David Hampton. David, Fifty years ago, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then with the Department of Labor, warned that the collapse of the black family was making neighborhoods poorer and more violent. At that time, 25% of

African-American babies were born to single mothers. Today, the number is 71%. I have heard you express your concern about fatherless households. Besides the fact that these families are inherently less stable financially, what are you concerned about?

**DR. HAMPTON:** Well, I've mentioned in a number of settings the concern over that number you just mentioned. In the 1950s, fatherless homes were at 25%. Today, they're upwards of 70%. And I think the dynamics are varied. Just the most obvious dynamic is anytime there's a breakdown in the family structure in terms of a father not being in the home, statistics can tell you that there are adverse effects on children—regardless of race. But when we talk about fatherless homes in the 70% range, a number of issues arise and, you know, IMPD can tell you that one of the contributing factors to juvenile delinquency is the lack of parenting.

Young men need positive male role models. Some of them are each other's role model. I would even go so far as to say we see a rise now in teen gun violence due to a lack of a positive male role model in the home. Almost every day we hear of another shooting or aggravated assault among teens. It used to be that teens looked to gangs for the type of support they may have lacked by way of a positive father figure. Today, I think we've moved from gangs to guns. A gang is not as important to join if I can get a gun. Then I can protect myself. That change has produced some very negative effects that reverberate across our communities.

I'll also go so far as to say, in terms of African-American fatherless homes, many fathers are not present because of some of the racial disparities in prison time handed down. They are arrested and incarcerated, where some of their white counterparts are not, and at a much higher rate. So it's not just that fathers are not being fathers; some cannot be fathers because they're incarcerated.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Cindy, you deal with single moms in your ministries every day. How hard is it for them, without the support of a spouse, both in an emotional and a financial way?

**CINDY PALMER:** Well, it's certainly difficult. Single parenting is relentless. Anybody who's a single parent knows it's extremely difficult. But the moms that I'm working with and that I'm spending time with—my friends, they wanted a father in their lives. And when the father's not there, the protection that God ordained fathers to provide for children is gone, which leaves these kids vulnerable to boyfriends in the home and men who will take advantage of them. It leaves them in a place where they're surrounded by a world of men who

success? What is manhood? What is fatherhood? When you're in these environments, you can remain shattered unless someone else comes into your life.

I was fortunate enough to have a coach who spoke into my situation and then, of course, Christ came into my life and changed everything. But without those role models and influences, you have a lot to struggle with.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** What about those guns and gangs and their presence in the lives of these young people? Phil, can you talk to us about that?

**COMMANDER BURTON:** Well, unfortunately, we do have some gangs, but they are not super prevalent in Indianapolis. But we do have a lot of



haven't been raised by fathers. And so what I hear all the time is, "The men don't know how to be men." And they want men who know how to be men.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Does anybody have a thought about what that looks like? Dr. Ware?

**DR. WARE:** Well, you know what? I grew up without a father. And when I was in elementary school the male figure in my life was not married to my mother. Later my mom married someone else. Long story short, that early father figure came to the house one night, and my stepfather shot and killed him. That event shattered my hopes at that time in my life. And there are a lot of images that were damaging. And questions like, what is

violence that can be attributed to guns. So one of the things that the [Indianapolis Police] Chief is trying to do is to lower the rate of our nonfatal shootings. We had a large amount of homicides last year. And you can correlate the homicides to the nonfatal shootings because it is just about bullet placement. So, unfortunately, there could have been many more deaths.

But what Dr. Hampton said earlier about the trend going from gangs to guns—we do have a lot of guns that are on the street, and they are obviously, illegal. You know, everyone has a right to a gun, but we want them to do it legally. We're seeing a lot of illegal weapons and that has contributed to much of our teen violence.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Toby you've been sent in to foster positive relationships in difficult, even dangerous, atmospheres at times. What is your feeling about the health of the young male, black community, in the inner city?

**TOBY MILLER:** Well, I do get dispatched to try to create "we-are-the-world" situations, where everybody kind of sings Kumbaya. Dogs and cats get together and, like, "Hey we're family." Unfortunately, you don't really want to see that process

communities that I deal with, they really don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. I'm glad we're in a church, because the work reminds me of Paul [writer of much of the Bible's New Testament] who took risks to do what he did. To get people together you have to take risks too. Then the critics come out. Black people will look at you and say, "You're wrong," and white people will look at you and say, "You're one of them." And I think we all have to have the character to quickly shake

the only way to process anything. Certainly, understanding differences is important, but love is the most important thing.

So I've got a question for you. Phil, I'm working with some women who live in poverty in our inner city, and one of them has three children with two different dads. Both of the dads, now, are incarcerated. Although she works, without her former partner's help, she's been evicted, along with her children. Saddest of all is that her eight-year-old is already showing signs of hyper-masculinity and is very difficult for her to control. What do we do with this little boy who's eight years old? How do we save him?

**COMMANDER BURTON:** I think it's been mentioned about the need for positive male role models. And one of the agencies that I work with as a mentor, the Center for Leadership Development, has a program called Project MR. MR stands for "More Responsibility." We teach these young men in grades seven through 10 all about respecting themselves, respecting women, and respecting others. And we take them through a program that teaches them to be productive individuals.

So this young man would benefit from some type of program—and not only him; I don't know if he's got other brothers—but any of his siblings might benefit, because it provides positive male figures in his life. Now, we need to do this as young as possible. And I would get him a mentor in the church, as well. That can make all the difference.

**TOBY MILLER:** Can I throw something in here on that?

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Please do.

**TOBY MILLER:** I also challenge us all to look at all the kids from an asset perspective versus a liability respect. We all know the cliches, "Well, you have to identify the problem." But how would we feel about people looking at us and immediately seeing only problems? How many of us would feel like, "That's a game I want to keep playing"?

If we approach these young people, and their situations, from an asset



because its not always pretty. But when it works out well, it saves lives.

We have to approach some of these issues in terms of the challenges that both black men and white men are facing. We have to take away the positional debate, get away from "I'm black, you're white," and really get into what the players are interested in and concerned about. Because when you ultimately break things down, skin color becomes less of an issue. And then you can start finding out ways to develop real partnerships. And a partnership doesn't always require that we're—you know, we share the same bed, but a realization that, hey, you're my neighbor. I am going to function in a way that supports and advances your interests as well as my own.

Some of the folks in the

that off and get right back into the business of finding common interests, giving people the opportunity to be the man—Meaningful Active, and Necessary. If you take that risk, we have an opportunity to change the atmosphere and ultimately change some lives.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** One of the Bible verses that has spurred us on in this effort has been Paul's statement that he is not looking back, that he presses forward into the future. And I think that in any kind of endeavor that involves relationship building between people with different backgrounds, the tendency is to spend every minute rehashing every bad thing that's ever happened, which gets you absolutely nowhere. We believe that going forth with love is

orientation, I believe we'd bring positive energy to that whole situation.

I was interacting at a summer camp with young kids. And they were excited. They were saying how wonderful this camp was. And then they said, "We may be black, but we can be successful." Now, did you hear that? "We may be black, but we can be successful." As if that blackness is a liability, something to overcome. They're ingesting this negative energy so early in life. I said, "No, no, no, no, no. You have to change that paradigm for yourselves." We have to do that as a community, not look at, "Oh, those poor people." Because I guarantee, one of them was Christ, and we drove right by saying, "That poor person."

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Great point. And, David, I heard you speak at the Faith & Action event the other day. And one of the things I read as I was doing some studying, made me think of you. It was a statistic by the U.S. labor department that said young blacks have the highest rate of unemployment. The report said that "Poorly-prepared black and Hispanic young people are being pushed off the bottom rung of the economic ladder."

As a city, we know unemployment can lead to crime. And as Toby was saying, we need to have positive role models and maps for young people who may not have had those before. They may not have had a successful working parent, so they may not really understand the economic viability of a job or career for their futures. So what are we as a city doing to help get kids jobs?

**DR. HAMPTON:** Thanks for letting me brag on the mayor's office and the City of Indianapolis. I'm just very elated and proud to say that one of the mayor's initiatives is called "Project Indy." And you can certainly look up the link, [projectindy.net](http://projectindy.net). Last year, the mayor's goal was to hire 1,000—offer 1,000 jobs to teens. We met that goal. This year, we've doubled it; for 2017, it's 2,000 jobs. But here's the good news: We already have 2,500 commitments from employers. So those jobs are waiting, and we're very optimistic that we can fill those positions.

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As a young kid, you could have called me racist. I didn't like white people. I didn't trust white people. I didn't want to be around white people. And I was an angry young man. But when Christ came into my life, my whole world changed. — Charles Ware



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But I think you hit on something that is key for all of our young people, white or black. We have to ensure that they are job-ready. What is lacking, oftentimes, are those soft skills and social skills: How to look somebody in the eye. How to shake a hand. How to wear a suit, dress, or tie. The importance of getting to work on time. Resume' building. Those types of things are more social in nature and require—if they don't have someone in the home to train them, it requires us—the community, or our churches, to help them with some of those soft skills. So the real issue is not job availability, it might be job readiness.

Because, you know, the same dynamic applies to a young person trying to get a job as it does to a reentrant, looking for a job. You've been in prison 30 years and you're just released, and all of a sudden you're asked to go to a job. You haven't been acclimated to that job mentality. Or even a pro athlete who comes right out of college, hasn't managed five dollars, and then signs a five million dollar contract. If you can't manage five dollars how are going to manage five million? And we see statistics, even pro athletes, when they stop playing, have some of the highest incidences of bankruptcy because they're poor money managers because they didn't learn those soft skills.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** So are you training those soft skills? Are you giving them those soft skills?

**DR. HAMPTON:** Well, we're trying to provide the jobs first, that's the primary goal. But training is the next step.

**COMMANDER BURTON:** The Center for Leadership Development is doing an excellent job in actually teaching our young men those soft skills.

**CINDY PALMER:** But, you know, that's not just a problem for our youth; that's a problem for the women in our city who have become moms as high schoolers, or middle schoolers, and now they find themselves needing to provide for their family. And not only do they not have the education, but they don't have those skills. They can get a job, but they can't keep it. So even these adults need the skills to show up to work on time, to show up consistently, to be able to deal with constructive criticism on the job, and to be able to avoid drama on the job so that they can keep their jobs and grow in their jobs. It's not a desire to be a bad employee; it's just they haven't seen these skills modeled, they don't have it in their tool kit.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Well, speaking of tool kits. Could you talk a little bit about what you do in your two really important charities, and how you work to develop women in crisis into good mothers and employees and homeowners?

**CINDY PALMER:** Of course. I work with women in generational poverty in our

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This is a marathon, not a sprint,” because when everything in your tool kit is what you grew up with in generational poverty, every single one of those poverty-minded concepts has to be replaced with what will lead to life, to sustainable work and to becoming a great parent —Cindy Palmer

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city, and their kids, and we’ve learned so much over the years. But this work is really relationship building. You know, really, this isn’t a skin problem, it’s a sin problem, and the ravages of generational poverty which cause the breakdown of God’s design for identity, for family, and for structure.

He’s built so many skills, so many talents into everyone, but they need to be called forth. And like Toby was saying, you know, if you grow up hearing, “You’re a problem,” or you grow up hearing, “You’ll never amount to anything,” you’ll grow up believing those lies and you’ll believe it is because of your skin color.

So we start with helping women understand the one who designed them. Who they were created to be. And then, what was the life that the Creator intended them to live? And when they catch a glimpse of that, they begin to own their own potential. But it is a long walk. We say, “This is a marathon, not a sprint,” because when everything in your tool kit is what you grew up with in generational poverty, every single one of those poverty-minded concepts has to be replaced with what will lead to life, to sustainable work and to becoming a great parent.

No one wants to be a bad mom. People just do what they know to do, and what they know to do is what has been done to them. So we teach what God’s words say about “being.” Get a vision for being a mother. Get a vision for being the head of your household. Get a vision for what it means to be a

member of your community. Get a vision for loving your neighbor. That’s what we do.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** And Cindy you have moved from Carmel to the Brookside neighborhood to live with these neighbors that you now love. But, when we talk about children and the creation of a better future for them, the schools become very important in that discussion.

So my question is for Charles. As an educator and a pastor, how concerned are you that 11 of our IPS schools have received the grade of F, and it most affects black children who are living in the inner city?

**DR. WARE:** I am extremely concerned. I have a son who is the administrator over five failing schools in Memphis. In his career he has demonstrated some of the image re-shaping we’re talking about. He would come in the schools and he greet all the students, shakes their hands, and says, “How are my very positive scholars doing today?” Every classroom would have a college, kind of assigned to it. The kids would take on the identity of these colleges, they root for these schools and get into their young minds, “You’re going to college.” At the same time he works with parents to do a better job directing and helping their children’s development.

So I think IPS has a real opportunity in the area of creating a positive self image and a picture of a successful life for each child.

Let me give you an example from

my own life. My parents were migrant workers and I was in seventh grade, a black male, didn’t think I could do anything, but there was a white teacher who called me her “All-American Boy.” That one person, at that time, gave me a different vision of myself and I went from being a failing student to carrying an average of 99 percent in her class. This is something we train pastors to do here at Crossroads Bible College. A church is a community that can come around people and give them a vision of who they are in God’s eyes and when they see that, they can develop the confidence to be the man or woman they want to be.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** So in that same vein, Phil, I’ve read that the number of children who cannot not read at grade level in third grade is used as an indicator of future prison space needs. I also know that teachers are not miracle workers, that kids need equal parts mentoring in the home and teaching in the schoolroom. So how does it affect the police when our schools are failing?

**COMMANDER BURTON:** I don’t want to lump everyone in a box, because that’s what I’m trying to stop the media from doing. Sometimes the message is that all juveniles are bad, and they are not. But, we have to make sure schools are giving kids the right message and that schools are given all the necessary tools. There is a job for the parents to do and we’ve seen that a lot of parents who are

extremely young are not mature enough, in my judgment, to understand their role in helping their child learn to read or make sure they do homework and are not getting into trouble after school.

It's unfortunate that some may end up incarcerated, but I don't think those statistics actually say that because they can't read in third grade, they're automatically going to go that route. So, while I think that more needs to be done in terms of educating kids, those young parents also need to be educated to do more with their kids at an earlier age so that they don't end up in the system.

It doesn't make me feel good—to answer your question—I don't like having one of my officers arrest anybody, particularly our youth. I'd rather get them the help that they need.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** And what is the police department doing that maybe is different than the way they used to operate?

**COMMANDER BURTON:** We are more proactive and not just reactive I think. When a juvenile is arrested we follow up with schools and parents if possible. Sometimes kids are arrested downtown, but don't live downtown, so Chief Roach and Chief Kinnett, who's my immediate boss, have initiated an effort to have our detectives do a follow-up, and we let the district commanders know where they live, and we arrange a visit to the homes, and we talk to the parents and let them know that, "Hey, your child was arrested. This is why they were arrested." And then we also go to the schools to let them know as well to see if there's any type of behavioral issues or peer problems that they may have. We believe follow up may help them keep from being arrested again.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** So our police are really coming around someone who might be a troubled child?

**COMMANDER BURTON:** Exactly.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** What about the issue of drugs right now? You were talking, David, about the heroin problem in the United States and in Indianapolis.

**DR. HAMPTON:** I'm sure Officer Phil can address this as well, but arguably heroin could be considered the crack epidemic of today. What crack was in the '80s is what heroin is today. It's cheaper and more potent too. I think IMPD is the prototype for the country, right? [To Commander Burton] IMPD carries Narcan. [a medication used to block the effects of opioids, especially in overdose] And by using it we've been able to save many lives in the city of those who have overdosed.

lying issues that are resulting in drug use.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Part of the new jail facilities will be an area for mental evaluation and beds for patients, right? Can you discuss that a little bit and what's happening there?

**DR. HAMPTON:** Sure. It's a work in progress. But as we think about building a new incarceration facility, a component of the mayor's Criminal Justice Reform will be a mental health diversion facility as well. So that way we don't continue to incarcerate individuals who are mentally ill, which is the case now.

Currently, 40 percent of our jails are filled with those who are mentally ill and 85 percent of those are mental-



**NANCY COTTERILL:** So how many cases of this are you seeing?

**COMMANDER BURTON:** Well, unfortunately, each one is one too many. But, we have saved lives and in addition to doing that, we then make sure the person is taken to the hospital, then we follow-up and try to get them the mental health resources that they need because many times there are under-

ly ill and drug addicted. So we want to have a treatment facility on-site which will allow us to free up more beds for violent offenders or those who really do deserve to be there. Mentally ill people need treatment, not incarceration.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** What about the problem with unemployment? Is it just that we don't have enough employment in or near the inner city? People

don't have the transportation to get to a factory or a venue that is miles away? To get there for an interview is one thing, but to get there every day for work is quite something else. What's happening on that front? I know that Cindy's husband, David Palmer addressed this need in a really inventive way. Cindy, can you talk a little bit about what David does?

**CINDY PALMER:** He works with men who are unemployable because they have a criminal background to give them an opportunity to develop skills and earn a living wage.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Now, these were formerly incarcerated people generally?

**CINDY PALMER:** Most of them, really, destroyed their lives with drugs and

You know, people need to come together. We had a student here once who had a felony. Because of the felony, he couldn't get a job. And he came to me once, almost in tears, he said, "What am I supposed to do? I apply for a job; they say I have a felony. So do I have to go back to selling drugs again?" But another student here who had his own business gave him a chance and he became a masonry bricklayer, learned a trade and was able to work. But this idea of bringing people together with different resources and providing innovative opportunities like that is ultimately our answer.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** I think churches can be a huge part of ending generational poverty in Indianapolis, but they are not alone in this. I've been here a while, and in my memory I don't believe we've ever had a city

the needs of others, they probably weren't great at raising money. And if we at **UNITE INDY** can form a foundation under them that is strong enough, we can see Indianapolis moving into this new century with a new vision, a vision of greatness and unity and love for our neighbors.

**CINDY PALMER:** Nancy, on that note, too, I think the body of Christ is working in so many ways. There are many small initiatives—people are putting their creative talents and their vocational talents to work on behalf of others in need. But we need more people and funds to come alongside them to expand their bandwidth and expand their impact. And we need more businesses collaborating, too, with believing faith-based groups and more economic development initiatives that will bring jobs to the city itself, and also bring

revenue that's going out of our state back into the state.

**TOBY MILLER:** Can I throw a monkey wrench?

**NANCY COTTERILL:** Sure. Monkey wrench away.

**TOBY MILLER:** Pastor, you're going to forgive me early, okay? We can pray about it later.

**DR. HAMPTON:** You've got it.

**TOBY MILLER:** I don't think we have a program problem. I think we have a heart problem. And I actually think the best program is God's program. Look at the

challenges we had just in transportation [Creating transportation to suburban areas from downtown]. Because what we don't tell the truth about is that we want people to be able to travel to suburban jobs from downtown. What is really being communicated is, "don't create a line that brings *them* out here." Well, where's the heart in that? I believe our churches missed an opportunity to really minister to the heart of our community in this.

they started making furniture out of donated pallet wood. The company is called Purposeful Design. But now they've kind of graduated and are making furniture for corporate use out of high end materials as well.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** But that's just one company—we need more companies near downtown, don't we?

**DR. WARE:** Yes we do and that is a good illustration of working together.

administration that didn't care, at some level, about making changes for people who were in poverty. But I think that we have to have a new vision about what we could become.

Jim and I have seen too many really successful charitable organizations working in the inner city that have gone out of business because of lack of funds. They are often Christian groups, but not always, and one thing they had in common was, although they were great at serving



So when we're talking about changing conditions of poor people, we're still talking about "them," and not "us," and not "we," it is evidence that we have a heart problems and we could make it a heart opportunity. In my opinion.

**NANCY COTTERILL:** I think that friendship is a place to start. We need to know each other. Everyone should have the adventure of getting outside their comfort zones and doing something of value. You don't have to fly to Zambia to get a new cultural experience or to help someone out. Bloom where you are planted. Do something here.

I have one last question for our host, Dr. Charles Ware. You wrote a book, "One Race One Blood," which I've found to be a really meaningful, important book. And I wanted to ask you about one thing before we all left. You say in this book, "*At the central core of racism, we find the sinful hearts of men living in a fallen world. This fundamental problem has no earthly cure.*" What does that mean to us?

**DR. WARE:** Well, I think we've talked about it a number of times. The power of the gospel, Jesus Christ, changes lives. As a young kid, you could have called me racist. I didn't like white people. I didn't trust white people. I didn't want to be around white people. And I was an angry young man. But when Christ came into my life, my whole world changed. I tell people I turned 180 degrees and haven't looked back.

I met a guy who was a former klansman. I spoke somewhere, and he came up and he said, "Brother, I was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. But I'm saved. Let's hug." Now, he was about 300 pounds. It was hard for me to get my arms around him. But that's the power of the cross and a changed heart. And that's what really motivates me. Above everything else is the difference Christ has made in my life

**NANCY COTTERILL:** And that's what's going to take care of racism. We have to keep walking towards the cross.

**DR. WARE:** Amen.



"You don't have to fly to Zambia to get a new cultural experience or to help someone out.

Bloom where you are planted.

Do something here."

— NANCY COTTERILL

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