

7th Commemoration
of the Massacre and Martyrdom
of the Mother Emanuel 9

June 17, 2022



A Resource of
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.

WHAT KIND
OF SOIL ARE WE
NURTURING?

WHAT KIND OF SOIL
ARE WE?

WHAT KIND OF SOIL
IS GOD CALLING US
TO BECOME?

National Bible Study

Prepared by the Office of Clergy Leadership
and Resource Development

Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.

The Journey

Conversation Partners

SDPC Contributors

Overview

Mark 4:1-9; 13-20

Launch Points

Pillars of Germination

Call to Action – Praxis

Black Martyrs – A Litany



CENTERING MOMENT



Have thine own way Lord

Have thine own way

Thou art the potter

We are the clay

Mold us in this moment

After thy will

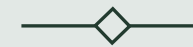
While we are waiting

For answers still

Adapted by: Adelaide A. Pollard



CONVERSATION PARTNERS



Rev. Marvin A. McMickle, Ph.D.
Rev. Dr. James A Forbes, Jr.

Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. Contributors



Rev. Dr. Iva E. Carruthers



Tiauna Webb, MDiv



Rev. Jamar Boyd II



Rev. Dr. Susan K. Smith



Antonia Ruth Coleman, MDiv



Overview

Why Are We Here?

We are going to be studying what happened at Mother Emanuel AME Church on June 17, 2015, and how it informs our Christian discipleship. The victims and the families of June 17th were students of *a just and redemptive* Christianity. Dylann Roof was a student of *reconstructed dominion* Christianity. We will be working to understand those differences and to see how believers can move from the conception of reconstructed dominion Christianity to atonement (becoming one with God) as well as how believers can find comfort in lamentation and forgiveness (can we forgive him?) and move us all to remediation (call to action).



Overview – cont'd

Originally founded in 1818 by Reverend Morris Brown, the Homestead Church (presently referred to as [Mother Emanuel AME Church](#)), was the largest black church in Charleston, with Denmark Vesey being one of the original members.

Denmark Vesey was the mastermind of a very complex but unsuccessful slave insurrection in 1822. The date of the attempted insurrection was June 17, 1822, it was almost two hundred years later that Dylann Roof murdered nine members of [Mother Emanuel AMEC](#). The tension between the congregation members and whites in the community led to the church building being dismantled.

Both Vesey and the white community who dismantled the church used their understanding of Christianity and the Bible to justify their use of violence to attain their goals – Vesey's being of black liberation and freedom and the white mob's being continued oppression and enslavement of Black people.

Mark 4:1-9
The Parable of the
Sower



1 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.

2 He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching, he said to them:

3 “Listen! A sower went out to sow.

4 And as he sowed, some seed fell on a path, and the birds came and ate it up.

5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil.

Mark 4:1-9
The Parable of the
Sower



6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched,
and since it had no root it withered away.

7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the
thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded
no grain.

8 Other seed fell into good soil and brought
forth grain, growing up and increasing and
yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

9 And he said, “If you have ears to hear, then
hear!”

Mark 4:13-20
The Parable of the
Soils



13 And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables?”

14 The sower sows the word.

15 These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy.

Mark 4:13-20
The Parable of the
Soils



17 But they have no root and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

18 And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word,

19 but the cares of the age and the lure of wealth and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing.

20 And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

Questions for Reflection:

- Could Dylann Roof believe he was doing God's will and that the deaths of these Black people from his hand were merely the execution of God's judgment?
- Were the Bible study students nurtured in "good soil?" Are we nurtured in "good" soil?
- How has the kind of soil in which we have been nurtured informed what we do and how we do it?
- How do other labels we take on define our soil such as Pan-Africanists? Or Womanists? Liberationists? Traditionalists? Is there a soil of white supremacy/domination? Bigotry? Racism? Sexism?
- The soil germinates the seeds! The soil in which we are germinated is tilled by the sower. The Sower may be a parent or pastor, or teacher, ultimately the spirit or will of God. That same soil either has or does not have the spiritual nutrients to lead us to a place of atonement or forgiveness, and finally, remediation – the return to a place of spiritual and social oneness with God.
- How do we reflect on the type of soil in which Dylann was nurtured that led him to commit mass murder in a bible class? What might have been different about that soil and "God-nutrients" that would have allowed for a different outcome?
- The recent mass murders of Black people in a grocery store in Buffalo, NY is but another example of America's culture of racialized violence seeding beliefs and actions grounded in white supremacy. How do these acts effect trauma upon the African American community at-large, children and elders?

Launch Points



Seed

Soils

Pillars of Germination

Eschatology

The Crossroad



Seed

“Just because good seed has been planted in us, does not mean our lives will necessarily or automatically yield good fruit.” (Dr. McMickle, page 3)



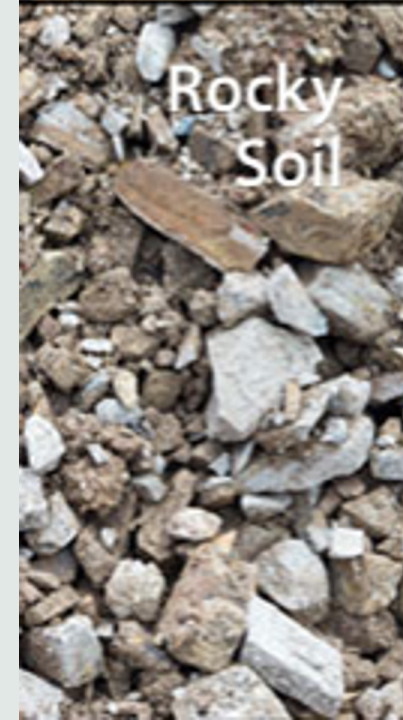
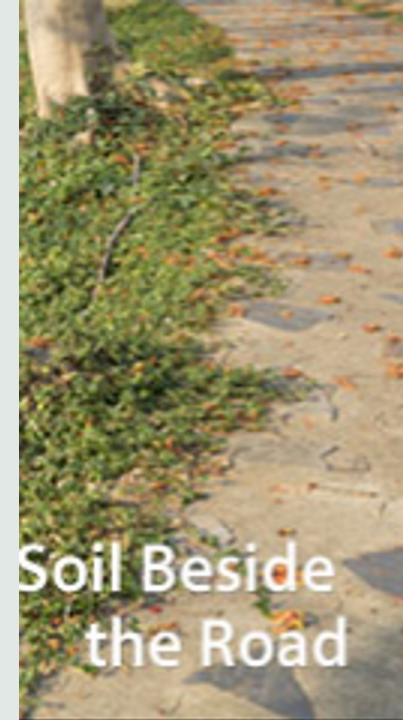
- Seeds are always subject to the elements that surround the soil.
- The church is not the only field where good seeds are being sowed.
- Satan has a way of choking off seed even in the best soil.
- Some seed never takes root at all.



Soils



- Our job is to be that good soil into which God can plant the seed that is the gospel message.
- Soil reminds us that we are constantly impacted by the political events and the social environment going on around us.
- The Gospels ask us:
 - “What Kind of soil are we nurturing?”
 - “What kind of soil are we?”
 - “What kind are we to become? How can we become good soil in which seeds of the gospel of grace and redemption can grow? What is God saying to America about its spiritual dilemma?”



Pillars of Germination

How do the pillars of germination below lead one to atonement and forgiveness?

Holy Rage

Lamentation

Grief

Comfort

Grace and Mercy

Love

Peace

Kindness

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

John 14:17



Eschatology



Eschatology, as defined by Dr. McMickle, is “the part of theology that is concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.”

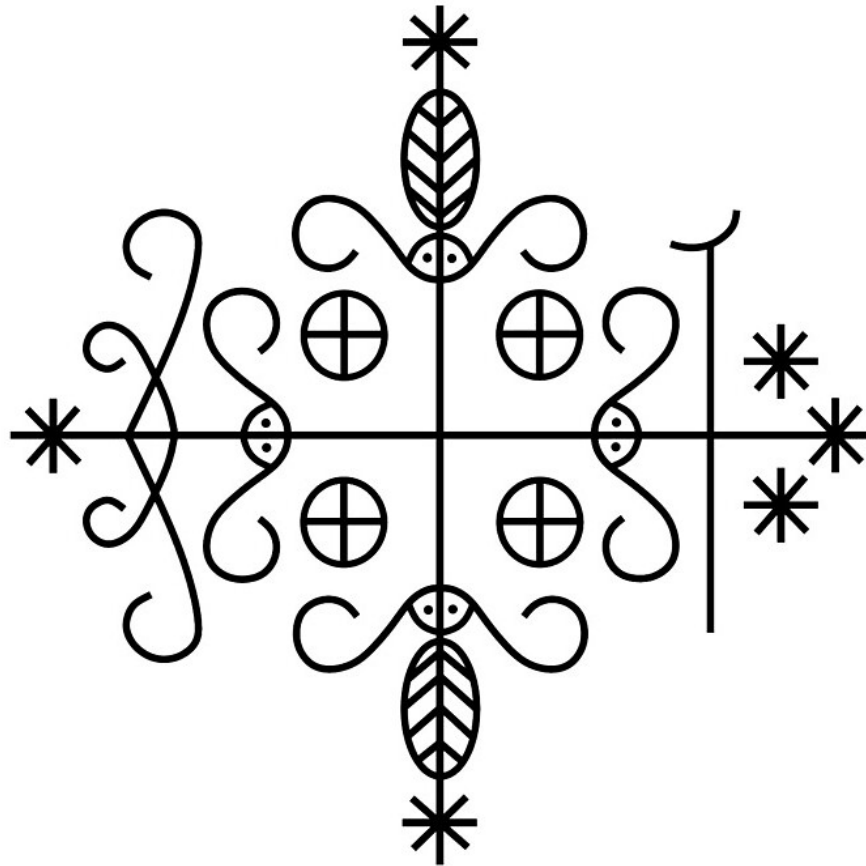
- First, that God has granted to humanity the option of free will so that people are free to choose whether or not they will embrace the message of the gospel. (page 6)
- Secondly, eschatology points us to the patience of God who allows time for the good seed – the message of the gospel to sink into human hearts. (page 6)
- It reminds us that no matter how bad or hopeless things may seem at any point in time, the seed that God has sown in the earth, in the church, and in the lives of those who are good soil will produce a great harvest. (page 6)

The Crossroad

“What must we do to interrupt the soils of white domination that continues to nurture global racialized terrorism upon people of African descent?” (Iva Carruthers)

“What tools of the spirit were in their hands with which to cut a path through the wilderness of their despair?”

(With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman, p. 193)



Call to Action – Praxis and Resources

Identify possible next steps that can be undertaken as evidence of discipleship and prophetic witness. *Each bullet has a link to additional resources.*

- AS AN [INDIVIDUAL](#)
- AS A [CONGREGATION](#)
- AS A [COMMUNITY](#)
- AS PREPARATION FOR [THE CHILDREN](#)
- AS [SEMINARIANS](#)
- [AS A MEMORIAL TO THE MOTHER EMANUEL 9](#)
- AS SUPPORT FOR THE BUFFALO 10
- [AS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION](#)
- AS ACTS OF [REPARATORY](#) AND [RESTORATIVE](#) JUSTICE



A LITANY FOR BLACK MARTYRS
AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE HYMNAL
#83 (ADAPTED 2022)

Black Martyrs – Litany

"When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God, and for the testimony they had given." (Rev. 6:9)

With grateful hearts and uplifted voices, we remember those who held to the faith, for they gave their lives in the struggle to be free.

Thank you, God, for Black martyrs. Because of them, we are blessed.

Blessed are those mighty men and women of strength, who set a path for others to follow.

Lord, help us, that when our time comes, we too may face persecution and even death, with pride and dignity.

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
(Matt. 5:10)*

Black Martyrs – Litany

Nubian queens and great kings foresaw the plight of slavery to be one of oppression and cruelty. They resisted, preferring death.

Blessed are those who threw off the shackles of powerlessness and looked to a better day.

Crispus Attucks, Nat Turner, John Brown, the Scottsboro boys, Robert Brown Elliott, Brothers Martin, Malcolm and Medgar as well as Steve Biko responded to cruel injustice with their lives.

The flowers of freedom are watered with the blood, sweat and tears of our ancestors who never gave up the fight!

O Lord, have mercy on our world. It has embarked on a journey that is in great need of your intervention

Black Martyrs - Litany

In the spirit of Denmark Vesey, we long to see the promise of freedom blossom in the land of the living.

Oh Lord, have mercy on our world.

In the spirit of Cynthia Wesley, Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robertson, and Denise McNair – four girls were murdered in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.

Oh Lord, have mercy on our world.

In the spirit of the many unnamed and named martyrs lynched who died at the hands of lynch mobs.

Oh Lord, have mercy on our world.

Black Martyrs - Litany

In the spirit of Rekia Boyd, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, Pulse attendees, George Floyd, the countless others

Oh Lord, have mercy on our world.

In the spirit of the faithful Mother Emanuel 9 who will forever remain beacons of light on our paths.

O Lord, have mercy on our world.

In the spirit of the Buffalo 10

Oh Lord, have mercy on our world.

Black Martyrs - Litany

Jesus Christ, the righteous, the Afro Palestinian, he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins for the whole world.

Black martyrdom wears many faces, but the response to the call is the same. God, we know that we will be victorious. We claim victory in your name.

Oh Lord, have mercy on our world. It has embarked on a journey that is in great need of your intervention.

We will not shrink in the face of duty. We will not meander in the maze of mediocrity.

As martyrdom knocks on our hearts even now, may we be willing to sacrifice everything to ensure freedom and deliverance. We give thanks to God, who leads and guides us all.

Playlist for Reflection in These Times

FOR GERMINATING SEEDS

Let There Be Peace On Earth

God Is On Our Side

Trust Me (With Vision)

It Is Well

We've Come This Far By Faith

I Don't Feel No Ways Tired

He Cares For You

FOR TILLING THE SOIL

Changed

You Know My Name

My Help Cometh From The Lord

I Love The Lord

He's That Kind Of Friend

Create In Me A Clean Heart

Come Thou Fount Of Every Blessing

Special Thank Yous

The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference Media Team

L. Julie Torrey Parker, LaRita Logan, MDiv, and Shawn Bell

The Reverend Eric S. C. Manning, Pastor, Mother Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, SC

THE END

For more information and other resources, please visit

<http://www.sdpconference.info/>