



## Interview with David Matthews

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Transcript of an Interview about Life in the Jim Crow South  
Indianola (Miss.)

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## Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South

An oral history project to record and preserve the living memory of African American life during the age of legal segregation in the American South, from the 1890s to the 1950s.

### ORIGINAL PROJECT

Center for Documentary Studies at Duke  
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Paul Ortiz: Reverend Matthews, can you tell me when you were born and something about the community that you grew up in?

David Matthews: Well, I was born 1-29-20 and I grew up in a rural community not too far from here, about eight miles south, Woodburn community. And my mother and father were Christians and they were laborers. We were sharecroppers. My father was a sharecropper. We had high moral values in that they taught us against stealing, robbing or taking anything that was not ours. They were very strict on non-use of alcohol and gambling, fighting, carousing, the bad house, they call it those days. Juke joints, they were against that. They also taught us to do a day's work for a day's pay and be honest with people as we go from day to day. And we were in a rural setting where we had school, four month school. We would go about four months and then school would close out and through the courtesy of some of the parents the teachers were retained for maybe another month or so but even at that sometimes the parent would have a problem with the bosses on a place. They wanted a lot of children to work in spite of the fact the parents were responsible for the teachers being retained. Those are some of the experiences. We walked to school and there were no bus transportation for blacks. Of course in those days everybody bought their own books. There were no tax free books or tax supported books I should say. Our schools were usually were one teacher to two,

sometimes three or four teacher type schools. Later on we got about four teachers. One teacher had the responsibility of administering to the various grades throughout that school, maybe one through six or whatnot. And later on we got four teachers and we could be a little more some departmentalizing in that there was somebody maybe special in English and then the other mathematics and social studies maybe taught by somebody else. But it was bundled up. To come out of that community was sort of like climbing out of a pit without a ladder. Like you can jump up one step and fall back two. My brother and I came to high school here but we had to use the family car to get to high school because there was no transportation, about eight miles. We would fix flats and buy a little gas and come to school. In the meantime, in the eleventh grade I was called into service and I went in the service and my brother remained here. He finished high school and then he started teaching after finishing high school and then going to school in the summer and finally finished college and then became an administrator, a principal. He went to Delta State and got a master's degree. I came out of service and went to Morehouse and graduated Morehouse in 1950. I attended Atlanta University in 1950 in the summer and Delta State University later and Memphis Theological Seminary. I was called to the pastorage here and I started teaching so I did a dual job. I taught and I pastored for quite a few years. However, I'm not into teaching

now. I retired from it in 1983, teaching. Now those days were rough days. The whites in the community were bused into school and blacks had no transportation and very short school terms. They were given nine months, we were given four. Now the school here in town ran nine months. They called it Rosenwald in those days. But those who were in town had access to it. Those who were out could come in but you had to have your own transportation if you were accepted. That's how we got through high school but it a was rough go you know. We worked on the plantation and we got paid seventy-five cents a day and the day was from sun-up until sun-down. Not no eight to twelve or nothing like that but as long as the sun shined you worked. They used the term from can until can't, time you can see it until you can't see it. That was the rule of thumb. However, during those days of struggle and poverty the so-called black community was pretty closed knit together. There were problems but they were closer together than they are now because we had to share. Borrowing one from the other, sharing one with the other, garden products and whatever you had you shared it and of course we didn't have to lock the door. We didn't have much but we didn't have to worry about anybody taking that little because nobody was taking from anybody. It was a rarity for somebody's house to have been broken in because most of the times they weren't locked. We didn't lock the church in those days. The churches remained open and the homes remained unlocked. As a

matter of fact, in the summertime with no air conditioning, no electric fans, people could sleep on the porch and nobody wouldn't bother them and be content. But it was days of poverty. We had to have, mosquitoes bothered us. Sometimes you could afford them and many times most of the houses had no screens on them and we struggled through those days. Most farming was done by horsepower not tractors. We gathered the crops by hand. We planted by mules and horses, whatnot. We had to learn to live pretty close on the farm. We got a little money by day work and got a little money by selling some of the produce as vegetables and chickens and eggs and that kind of thing. And clothes were a rarity because we were not able to get them. We kept plenty of food because my father would grow it. But he couldn't grow clothes (Laughter) so we had to struggle to buy a few clothes and we didn't get many of those but we made out with what we had. But I do admire them for several things. One, they gave us a name and all of us had the same name. We were given the honor of having a mother and father and they loved us. They were uneducated but they gave us some fundamental moral principles that will stand today. And so consequently none of us have been on a farm or in ( ) or anywhere like that. We have been able to escape and shun that kind of thing because of the principles they imbedded within us. That has meant much more to many families than just academic education because many of them have received the proper

education academically and then go wild otherwise. So we've been blessed to that extent. I had one brother who died in 1982. He pastored and also was principal when he died. He was principal of Sunflower School and he pastored Cleveland-Clarksdale. His daughter was principal up there until this past year. They sent her up the road but she was principal of the school that he was principal of. He had a lot of children. I just have one daughter. She has two children. We have two grands. My brother had a lot of children. One of his sons is a doctor. He's in Atlanta now in the School of Medicine to become a surgeon. And all the rest of them finished college except one, Louis, who was prematurely born. He has seizures. But the rest of them finished college and are doing well.

In those days naturally segregation was the order of the day. You see in this brochure colored waiting rooms were everywhere. White and black even in the courthouse up here, they had a little window where you go in and get your tag, a little dark corner. They would issue tags to the whites way out in the bright lights and every once in awhile they would see you and wait on you and wait on a white. You were discriminated against severely along those lines in public places. They had a colored fountain and a fountain for whites. Those are some of the things that were prevalent in those days. I don't know if you have any questions you want to ask.

PO: Reverend Matthews, I was wondering, earlier you talked about the fact that black children's school was only open four months out of the year.

DM: Right.

PO: But that parents helped to keep it open another month. How did black parents do that?

DM: They would scrap up money or vegetables or milk, butter, eggs, flour and those that had a little money would share a little money with the teachers and the teachers who were interested in our plight would dedicate themselves to serving on a month or so because of the needs of the children and the interest of the parents who would give enough to retain them there for that one month which was a real sign of dedication because they weren't getting much. I think some of them would get forty dollars or thirty dollars a month, something like that. It was very little. However, the prices were cheap but still that was a low wage in any area at any time. They were dedicated. They'd stay there and share with us. We had one retired teacher's husband who gave my brother and I some books. We would come in at twelve o'clock and sit out on the porch and read those books. When we got to something hard there was a professor in the community who had retired for years, his name

was Abraham, he would come along and he would show us something about algebra, you know, if we didn't understand. He'd share with us and give us some pointers on arithmetic and that kind of thing. But we'd come in after we worked that morning, come in that noon hour and spend that noon hour after we'd eat or before we eat reading books. Then if we had some spare time, rainy weather or something like that, we would grab those books and start reading because they were gifts to us, English and that kind of thing, mathematics and whatnot. We had to study whatever spare time we got because we were laboring you know, working raising cotton and corn and that kind of thing and the sharecropper usually settled and you wasn't going to get much anyway. When we were small many times my father came out in debt. I remember one year we had a Holstein cow and that cow got a hold of some poison. My father locked her up, nailed her up, and she broke out and got to the water bath. She died at the water bath. She was one of those four or five gallons of milk a day cows and when we lost that cow that was like losing your arm. So he went and the bossman told him to pick out a cow and he picked out one and got the cow. But we had to pay for the cow out of the crop at the end of the year. It was a necessity because we always kept usually, we usually had two cows, one in and one out because we produced our own milk, own butter, chickens, our own eggs and own vegetables. If a neighbor had vegetables and we didn't we'd share and if we had

it and they didn't, we'd share like that you know. There was no refrigeration. We put up, my mother put up peas and okra and tomatoes and that kind of thing in jars and put them back, peaches, for winter days. My father killed meat and what he would do, salt it down, drain it and salt it down and cut around the joints, put salt in there and let it go through that salt and then take it up and dry it out. Sometimes he'd put it in the smokehouse and smoke it and it would keep. That salt would really solidify that meat so that it wouldn't spoil. We had different ways to improvise to survive and that's the way we got along. We didn't have electric lights. We had lamp lights. Later on we got electric but we had to study by lamp lights. We didn't have lights all over the house to see how to get along. It was days of poverty. There were some who got along pretty well because there were those who didn't respect the law. They made this corn whiskey and they got along pretty well you know.

(Laughter) They made corn whiskey and they'd sell it and they'd buy them cars and stuff like that. But I give my father credit, no matter how well they got along he would not deviate.

He would not make whiskey or sell it and he wouldn't encourage us to do it. He said you know, you live right and eventually the Lord will bless you if you work hard and live right. That was his philosophy. So he never did get into that kind of thing, gambling, whiskey making, that kind of thing, he didn't do it. He gave us a good example of a good life, you know, a

decent, moral life. And that stuck with us you know. So in spite of the poverty there were some things he wouldn't do.

PO: Reverend Matthews, when you were growing up what was the role of the church in your community and was there more than one church?

DM: There were several churches in our community. There was Saint John's Church of which we were members. We lived right in the yard almost. There was Morningstar above us I guess about a half a mile. Then there was a Methodist church back on the place. They usually had service in the school that was built and we would go to those three churches. There were others a distance away but those were close around, in walking distance.

We would go to Saint John's every third Sunday, on the fourth Sunday maybe Morningstar and maybe the first Sunday we'd go to the Methodist church you know in the community. We just interchanged because each church had service one Sunday but you had prayer service every week, you know, and Sunday school every Sunday and they had choir rehearsals maybe two or three times a month. There were some activities going on. They also had what they called, Friday night they had box suppers. The way that operated, the ladies would fix a box and the man would be responsible to buying it. And then they would have fruits and that kind of things they would sell on the side and this was an

activity at the church which was a wholesome activity that gained some money for the church and an outing for the youngsters that they would have some free time and wholesome time and get together. A young man, a young lady would, in other words would give him a card and she would cook the box and bring it out and then she'd fix it, you know vegetables, cakes and whatever in the box and it was really one of the nice times in the church. On the Fourth of July usually the owners, the plantation owners, would sponsor barbecue and maybe a barrel of lemonade and that kind of thing and light bread and maybe ice cream. And sometimes some of the organizations like ( ) and Daughter would have a big activity, a picnic or something like that you know, you would be a part of, some days that would enable you to forget about your poverty I guess (Laughter) and fellowship together. The schools, even though they had short periods would have commencement exercises and special programs in which we would have to learn speeches and whatnot that would sort of inspire us. Like inventors and whatnot, they would instill that in you. Literature, give us some kind of outing that was different from our everyday environment.

PO: Reverend Matthews, were there revivals in your community?

DM: Oh yeah, we had revivals. Usually revivals would come after the crop was laid by, usually about up in July, August and

first of September. Usually revivals would come in July, August, first of September. Most of the time they would be over by September the first or second Sunday of September. They were greatly attended because the ministers were fireballers and they preached damnation as well as salvation. They gave it all they had and people would fill up the churches day and night. And also on Sundays they would fill them up day and night because there were not as many things to detract as we have now. They didn't have anything like riverboat casinos and that kind of thing. And special TV programs and all of that, we didn't have that so the church really got the attention of those of us in the community at those revival times and also regular service got their attention. And the parents were more in control then than they are now because most families were close together, close knit. The father was there and the mother was there unless death or something. Rarity for a family to have a divorce situation in our community. They would stick together and the family would be together. We ate together and we went to church together and programs, whatnot together. So there was more togetherness then. Fathers of the house were there and the sons couldn't get out of line because the old man was there and it made a lot of difference. However, some women controlled the place they lived too but you know, not all of them. But the father and the mother were there. That made a difference, made a lot of difference in the discipline. And I guess the second

thing, the broad perspective was that the community observed the actions of the children and if they were out of line then any citizen in that community would be willing and ready to call you back in place. And of course if that didn't do they could even spank you and nothing would be done about it when you'd go home except you'd get a second one. (Laughter) But now you look for a lawyer and a court order. But it wasn't like that then so you had a more close knit community.

PO: Reverend Matthews, you're talking about a lot of differences between the generations. Were there also differences in the spiritual beliefs say from your grandparents' generation way of worshipping?

DM: Yeah, they were genuinely, I guess they were fundamentalists in their beliefs. They didn't deviate. In our day and time the belief is different and different shades of belief and different doctrinal beliefs among us. Some believe and some are non-believers. Some are just there to put on a show. We had a few of them then too but not like we have now. There were not as many detractions as we have now. Sometimes a person wants to be good over here, good over there and good everywhere and then finally good nowhere. But we have a lot of that now. We're experts in everything then biblically as the Lord blessed the Israelites they veered away and we've been

blessed in these last few years above what we were then and that gives us a lot of choices that we didn't have then and a lot of ideologies are coming in now that weren't prevalent in the community. So we are more or less in homogeneous community religiously. There was no problem whether you were going to have prayer in school. Who's going to do it might have been the best question. But now we have a heterogeneous community in terms of religious beliefs, religious practices, non-religious persons all mixed together in one and then under the Constitution all of us have our rights whether it's religious rights or whether it's atheist's rights or whatever, non-religious beliefs or whatever, all of us have our rights. So consequently it gives us a different phase of connections now than we had then because we're not as close together spiritually or religiously or even our economically. We have different beliefs on the economic front. You're a professor you know how we vary and differ. You can't hardly get two professors together now because one believes over here and one believes over there and both of them are educated. So as we become academically educated and exposed to the variety of religious beliefs and doctrines, then we become more heterogenic in our communities rather than homogenic in the community and that has taken its toll as you very well know from your study and observation. That has happened in our community also. Years ago most of us were either Methodist or Baptist. Now we are

Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Church of God in Christ, Apostolic - just name it and we're that. Muslim, we've got some of those.

PO: When did that begin to change?

DM: Well, a lot of that changed emerging in the civil rights movement. A lot of it started emerging in the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement had a grand and glorious, well goals, I say goals, objectives and the means through which they were to be obtained was varied. Some wanted to obtain them through radicalism and maybe revolution. And then some wanted to obtain them through peaceful means and political means and others varied from that. And then you had various leaders jumping into the movement sort of like a lot of folks jumping in the pool. Various group leaders jumping into the pool and they started emerging with different ideas. Martin Luther King's peaceful movement and Malcolm X came in and then you had Black Power moving in. Another thing they did they started using a lot of children and of course the reason as you know for using children was that they could not take them and lock them up and keep them forever. And they would bare a heavy part of the burden and consequently when those children came out baring the burden, they were gone. They were, you know, we're our own boss. We led you out and you can't tell us anything. That had

a devastating affect on the unity in the community and it also divided a lot of leaders in the community in that some, you know we had a lot of activists over against determinists. You know some people believe that well God's going to do it, it's planned, it's just part of the divine movement. Others believe that if it's going to be done we're going to have to do it ourselves all together totally without God in it anywhere. So we had two extremes and that divided us quite a bit. We were arguing among ourselves. We had dictators in the movement who if you didn't do like he said or the way he said then you were no good to Uncle Tom. So we got a lot of branding, name brands, that were not justifiable because you have one method and I have another and another person has another method doesn't mean that we don't have the same objective. But different means by which we would achieve that objective were confusing in the movement and we had a lot of arguing one against the other and one against the other. That sort of got us in pretty bad shape. But there was some congealing among some of the groups coming together and looking at the objective but in the midst of all the movement you always have those guys who want to stand out front and who want to be elevated by the movement and profit by it, not only in terms of prestige but in terms of money. You know a lot of guys got a lot of money out of that thing, the movement and they kept the movement going and if there was no disturbance they would create a disturbance because the money

was getting low. (Laughter) You've got to refurbish the caucus. That happened in a lot of situations. And of course you can name some of them yourself.

PO: Reverend Matthews, going back to your earlier years, did you know your grandparents or the experiences of your grandparents?

DM: No, I didn't have the opportunity of knowing them. The only thing I knew is what my father and mother would tell me. I knew my mother's father for a short while until I got about four or five years old, he passed. But I never met my father's father or his mother. My mother's mother was passed. Her father was a minister and he passed when I was about four or five years old or something like that. But I never knew my father's. The only thing I knew was he'd tell us about his father. His home was out at Edwards, Mississippi and he grew up out there and he sort of migrated to the Delta and he stayed in this Delta area. Then he and my mother met and they married in the Delta and we were born in the Delta but I never knew much about his father except he made mention of him several times. I never met him. But apparently he instilled in him some of the religious principles that he kept until he passed on. He died in 1982. He was about eighty-six years old when he died. My mother died in 1985. I had a brother that died in 1982,

preceded my father in death. I had another one that died in 1980. He was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he passed.

PO: Reverend Matthews, when you were a young man do you remember people still talking around any at all about Minnie Cox?

DM: Yeah.

PO: What did people say in the black community?

DM: Well they were admirers of Minnie Cox and what she accomplished. She was appointed under Teddy Roosevelt as the postmistress here in town and of course she had to go through a lot of pressure because many of the persons would not receive mail through her. They would go out to maybe the next place rather than get mail from the post office here. They would go somewhere else and get their mail and there was a kind of uproar you know. But they had a home over in the white community and the offspring had the home. I think they finally sold it but they were over there by that swimming pool over there. That was the Cox residence. Wayne Cox was the husband, smart man. The originator of the Penny Savings Bank here in Indianola and he did fine. He was a smart man. The way they got rid of that bank was that the bank was low in funds. You know you've got to

have so much according to the reserve and they came in on them.

They were able to borrow the money from a bank in Memphis and when they came and checked them they were in good. Then when they would check and they'd sent the money back they'd double right back on them and caught them with not quite enough in there and they intended to close it anyway and they closed them out. But that Penny Savings Bank was historical. And the first bank we've gotten since that is in Jackson, First America. It's down there now. That's the first one we've gotten since the Penny Savings Bank went down here in Indianola. They were wise people. I didn't know them in person but I've talked with some of the older persons who did know and who were acquainted with them and who had been in their company and saw how they performed and how they bought land and acquired it and retained it. It was just remarkable what they did under those conditions because the conditions were not favorable for that kind of progress. But in spite of that they were successful.

PO: Reverend Matthews, were there sizable black land owners?

DM: Quite a few around here. The Stevensville community was just about black owned they tell me, just about owned by black folks. But gradually the older persons died and the younger persons had gone north, they'd come back and sell it for little or nothing. There were land owners all around, above town and

over toward the Morehead area and they had land all out in, well even in hilly areas they had land. But the younger persons had the wrong idea about land. You know they thought if you keep the land you've got to stay there and farm. Well you don't have to stay there and farm, you just keep the land. I used to teach economics and I would tell the kids that you know land is so valuable you shouldn't just get rid of it unless you have to. This guy says you can't do anything without land. A young man said oh yeah, I know what you can do without land. I said what is that. He said you can fly. I said where are you going to take off and where are you going to land. He said I hadn't thought of that. (Laughter) Because the population increases but land is constant and that makes the value go up. Supply and demand, it's the law of supply and demand. It'll go up. But we have lost a lot of land that wasn't necessary to lose a lot of land. And then a lot of times other folks will put pressure on us and offer to buy it you know and that kind of thing and even threaten. But those who retained it, they just kept it and some just sold out. They'd rather have the money than have the land. But that's what got us depleted in the land. It has been almost devastating to hear about the number of farmers across the nation, black farmers, that have failed, you know, sold out and stopped farming, that kind of thing. However, farming is like these major businesses and corporations, the larger ones are really driving the smaller ones out of business. Like your

small corner grocery store, he can't hardly survive now because you've got these supermarkets and they thrive as you know on volume. If you make two cents on an item you're still in good shape. But a little store can't get by with no five cents on an item. You've got to have more than that you know to take care of the overhead. But the farmer is suffering the same thing, same thing. Huge machinery, chemicals and handling that farm with these machines and combines and things that cost a hundred thousand dollars and equipment to go with it, costing maybe a hundred or two thousand dollars worth, a small amount of land can't support that kind of operation. You have to have a large quantity of land to support that kind of operation. And many farmers in our area, white farmers included, really go overboard buying equipment. Now I've traveled and I'm sure you have up to Illinois and Iowa. Those farmers in the winter take that tractor down and rebuild it and put it right back out on their farm. You didn't have no twelve row, eight row rigs running down the field. And some of these white farmers are in bad because they just overextend. And many of us want to be, there are some farmers around about Belzoni who retained their land and they are careful about what they do and they still have their land down in Humphrey County, black farmers who do well. But you've got to manage it just like you do anything else and a lot of us don't want to manage and don't want to work on a farm. We think it's a disgrace because we used to be on a farm.

PO: Reverend Matthews, what was your first and your worst experience with segregation?

DM: Well, when I was a lad some of the worst experiences I had was, I was driving the car for my father to pick up some elderly ladies on a Sunday and the man who owned the place next to us had a flat. I was coming down the road and he said take my wife to the house. I said I'll have to check my father. I checked my father and then I put the ladies out and went down to pick up his wife. Somebody had picked her up and he just deliberately cursed me out, just cursed me out. You so-and-so-and-so. And the next bad experience I had I was going to school at Morehouse in Atlanta. I got on the trolley that was from the railroad to Morehouse campus. We were on a fair street and I got on that trolley. Most of the folks that rode that trolley were black and we just got on it and got anywhere. When I got on that trolley that morning before day going back to Morehouse, I had come home and I caught the train I believe out of Birmingham, I rode a bus up there and I got the train out of Birmingham to Atlanta, got that trolley when I got off. Got on the trolley, I guess I sat about, the driver was up here and I sat about like here and a white guy was on there. Man, he cursed me for everything he could think of. You so-and-so. You black so-and-so. You don't so-and-so-and-so. I didn't say nothing. I asked

the driver I said now we've been sitting on this thing, you know you come down here. Most of his passengers were black. You come down to the Morehouse area and you have Morehouse, Spelman, Clark College and Morris Brown College and Gammon Theological Seminary up the hill and then a lot of black folks lived in the black community. So we had just been riding anywhere. He got on there that morning and he just had a spasmodic fit, you know.

Well what they'd try to do is humiliate you, make you and look like and feel like you're nobody. And I wasn't looking at him.

He was going to work somewhere at a common job, you know. He was going to just curse me out and that kind of thing. It was a bad experience.

PO: What was your response to that?

DM: I just asked the driver, I asked him what was the, he said well he's just a crazy peckerwood. (Laughter) So I didn't, it didn't take nothing off of me in terms of making me feel like I was nobody though. He didn't succeed there.

PO: The driver was black?

DM: No, he was a white driver. We had another experience, I was coming from Morehouse to Indianola. I was riding a bus and out of Birmingham we went up 78 I think to Memphis. It was cold

that night. It was snowing, it was sleeting, the wind was just coming through the cracks. What happened then, I got on and there were no seats and when a seat did appear, my seat was about middle way of the bus. There wasn't but one black on the bus, that was me. And I sat there and I just put my head in my hands. I just sat there and kind of dozed like. A white guy got on there and that wind was cutting him and his wife or somebody behind him and he said I ought to make that nigger move and let us take that seat. But you know she really fixed him. She said look, when he got on he had to stand up. Nobody gave him a seat and he got that seat and you'd just be a coward talking about doing something, making him get up. I didn't say a word. I was sitting there. They thought I was asleep. But she wore him out. (Laughter) Wore him out. You know he was going to be so bad. Well I'm standing up and nobody's giving me a seat and I'm black and then all the other folks come in white and until when there was no more white to fill up a seat then I got a seat. We were going to Memphis, you know, and you had that kind of thing.

The next experience I had going to school, we stopped in Dotham, Alabama or somewhere in Alabama and I was the only black on the bus at night. They stopped and all the white folks went in the front and rushed around and got a good meal, beautiful lights, waitresses, whatnot, waiting on them. I got off. I had to go to the back and get a hot dog out the window. You know

the waitresses, the folks who cook in the kitchen handed me a hot dog out the window. I had to eat that standing out in the cold in the dark and they were up front you know. Those kinds of things you always remember which is a drag on society especially when you haven't done anything to deserve it. These are some of the experiences. I've had many more but those were some of the outstanding experiences that I've had. I saw one time a man on a plantation, young man, said yes to the bookkeeper who was white. The bossman said to him, said as long as you live never say yes to a white person. As long as you live, never. He had to swallow and say yessir. That's all he could say because he had no power you know. But those are some of the experiences and of course there are many more you could get that you encounter. Sometimes we'd walk down the highway and the whites on the big yellow bus pass and you'd better not get close to a mudhole. They'd throw that water all over you and laugh. You know that mud, that gravel and water made for bad mud you know and splash it over there where we walked. But I think out of that we got a grand experience if we will apply it. It made those of us who came through it appreciate progress and success and opportunity for education and opportunity for a good job. Those later ones who came up and didn't have to go through it, apparently they have not the respect for the blessings that they enjoy and opportunities which are their's. They're not utilize them because they think it has always been

like it is now and has not always been. And I think that's one advantage we had to having to suffer and others who came along and who have not experienced that, they are just altogether different. And I think one of the answers that we need to share with them where we came from and how we got where we are and we that didn't do it by ourselves. You've got to always have some good white folks to help the black folks otherwise we wouldn't make it you know. In mid of all the bad ones you've got some good ones. Just like in our group, you've got some thugs but all of us are not thugs and you've got to apply the same thing to those white folks. Some of them had to do behind the cover to help blacks and they did it. Some of them helped the blacks to get land. (End of Side A)

Side B:

DM: But I do think they need to do historically. I think you're doing a good job there. Historically they need to know how they got where they are. It has not always been like this. And unless we change, we'll go back where we came from.

PO: Reverend Matthews, moving to your educational background, when did you first kind of get the vision to get into higher education and go on to Morehouse?

DM: Well, when I was in elementary school I had a professor by the name of Jones who came from here where I grew up. He was a graduate of Holly Springs, Holly Springs Russ College. He was smart, just a smart man. He was an inspiration and then when I finished elementary school and came to high school I saw Professor Dukes who was the principal of the school and also an agriculture teacher, I saw how he lived and I was inspired. But the greatest inspiration came when I was in the service, in the Army in World War II and I saw the difference between those who were educated and those who were not. And my ambitions were sharpened, determined to get some academic training that I would be able to make a contribution rather than just to be a consumer. When I came out of service I was accepted to Morehouse so I went on to school and finished there. There you had all kinds of inspiration because Dr. Mayes who was a top educator, everybody knows him, Bennie Mayes, was a top educator. He was an inspiring person. He spoke to us every Tuesday and they brought some of America's best on that campus, Roland Hayes and Marion Anderson, Henry Wallace, Ralph Bunch. They had, let's see you've got here Langston Hughes. We had Langston Hughes there. He stayed on the campus for about a week or two lecturing. And they had all kinds of top flight educators and speakers. Mordecia Johnson who's the president of Harvard University was our guest. We had Howard Thurman who was an outstanding person and Dr. Kelsey who worked in the New York

area. He was a teacher on the campus there awhile under him. And we had E.B. Williams who was a specialist in economics and Dr. Jones who was a specialist in foreign language. We had some top flight folks and they brought in top flight people, book reviews. Mrs. Mayes had what you called etiquette club and I became a member of that because I shot right out of the rurals you know and I wanted to be exposed to whatever was there. I went to book reviews and I went to the cultural activities like Roland Hayes and Marion Anderson, Ralph Bunch and all those people come in, I would go and be a part of it because it gave me a kind of lift that I didn't have and she had an etiquette club. I went to that club to gain some of the niceties and some of the know hows that you ought to have and it was great. It was a great university center that was more than just classroom exposure. You know it was exposure to a lot of things and that was the inspiration behind my education all the way up.

PO: Reverend Matthews, what came next after Morehouse?

DM: Well, after Morehouse I went to Atlanta University for a summer and I went to Memphis Seminary, Delta State. But after that summer at Atlanta University I came home and I started teaching. I taught in the rural school for about eight years and in the meantime I was called to pastorage, called here to pastorage and I served in those two capacities, pastoring and

teaching for several years.

PO: Where were you pastoring at?

DM: Right here at this church.

PO: What year?

DM: 1951, March, 1951. It sounds like about forty-four years (Laughter) and I've been here ever since. I was teaching. I taught thirty-three years in the classroom because I realized the congregation was not able to sustain the livelihood that I would prefer and I stayed by choice because I was invited out-of-state, as a matter of fact back to Atlanta to serve as a church pastor. They promised to give my wife a job and I wouldn't have to teach but I just elected to stay in this community. My parents were here and family was here and I grew up here and so I just stayed. I had an opportunity to go to Baltimore and Milwaukee and other places but I just stayed by choice and I can't fault anybody. I just stayed. But I think my staying here has been beneficial to others because we've been able to make some contribution to the community. In the teaching community and in the religious community and in the civic community I've been able to make some contribution although not without difficulty, sometimes being misunderstood

because I'm not a radical you know. I believe in peaceful approaches and I believe in the Biblical way if possible but I don't believe in folks running over folks. I think if you can achieve it without combat then achieve it. That comes last. That's the final thing to do is to get out and fight. Because I think of Abraham Lincoln who said when he had bottled up one of the enemies' general and they said to Abraham Lincoln why didn't you destroy your enemy, Abraham Lincoln's reply was when I make my enemy my friend do not I destroy my enemy. (Laughter) And that's true. If you can make your enemy your friend you destroy your enemy but you don't kill your friend. You still don't have an enemy there. I think your approach and your attitude and do a lot too. And then I think the law ought to be applied, however, when our attitudes and our actions don't come up, I think the law ought to be applied. I don't go along so much with some of the approaches that are being made now because if we turn everything over to the state and you had to sue the state to get to vote, had to sue the state to divide the areas up so you could have somebody elected, what's the state going to do if the state gets all the power back? That's my question. Affirmative action you know. I don't think affirmative action should be taken to the hilt if misused. But if you can't get a job no matter how you're qualified then there ought to be a power somewhere to give some kind of equality. That's my belief. I think the person ought to be qualified. But now if

my friend and I and others are together on making the test, setting up the criteria, judging it, saying who is who, how do I know if I'm qualified? How do I know that I'm not qualified? I'm not there. So we need representation at every level to really know whether we're qualified or not. And experience prior to this has taught us that in the state we had to sue for everything which is bad. Now some people wanted to do right but the majority wouldn't let them do right and consequently the federal government had to come in and make them do right. Then if all of this stuff is turned back to the state abruptly, what's going to happen? That's my question. I guess you're a man of history and whatnot. That's my question on this affirmative action. I don't think it ought to be created to make folks lazy. I don't think folks owe us a living just because we had a hard time. But I do think they owe us an opportunity to make good. And that's my stand on that affirmative action deal. And on the action of disqualifying a district because of race, I don't think a district ought to be created just because of race but I think it ought to be created to give a race representation in the government. Not just because they're black or white or whatever but I think all groups ought to have an opportunity to be represented in the government because if not we're going to have to come across the same thing we fought for in the Revolutionary War, taxation without representation. That's where I stand. But I do think

we ought to use all the caution we can.

PO: Reverend Matthews, you talked earlier about the civil rights movement in Indianola. What were the important black religious and civic organizations locally here before the civil rights era?

DM: Well we had the NAACP here. We had our churches here. We had our Baptist property down there, had a Baptist school down there. And before the movement we had a registration drive. Dr. Battle who passed was in it and of course I was a part of it. Many of us went up there to register. Many of us did register and the number was increasing so the clerk, city clerk, got belligerent. He said no you can't register! But I got registered and a lot of us got registered before he got in that shape you know.

PO: Was that in the 1950's?

DM: Yeah in the 1950's. I think I registered in 1952. We had registration drives then. Dr. Battle was the head of it and we went out to register as many as we could. We got quite a few registered then. Many were prohibited from registering and we registered all we could get registered. And after that later on the movement came in and the freedom riders and whatnot came

into the community and some of them said that we were lying, we hadn't registered you know but they hadn't gone and searched the books. All they had to do was look at the books. We were on the books. You can go up there now and look at the book and see that I was registered in 1952. It's on the book now when you registered. We had the registration drive. We had a NAACP meeting here at this church one time. But then later on the citizen's council got so tough and rough until it was economic suicide sometimes for some of the fellahs to do some of the things they did and some were cut off, denied jobs and were intimidated because of their civil rights stand. And when the movement came to town they were threatening churches and whatnot so we made an association and Dr. Chandler of Inverness, L.R. Chandler was the moderator. We made an association at Morehead and all of the churches voted in the county to grant the civil rights movement the use of our building. It was on this four acre plot down here and they were granted the use of the building. So the citizen's council or somebody burned the building down. We lost the whole building in that thing.

PO: What year did that happen?

DM: I believe that was somewhere around, I don't have the record of it now but I'd have to look it up. It was in the early 1960's I believe.

PO: The building was out...?

DM: It was on this plot down here, this vacant plot down here.

It was a school building and we granted them the privilege of using it and they burned it down. And then when our building was burned I think the Methodist church let them come up there and the pressure was so bad they come out of there. So the priest allowed them to come into his recreation center up there.

Father Monrod was the priest then. Then he set out to sabotage me and a few others in the process of the civil rights movement that we were nothing but Uncle Tom's and you know, we were no good and a lot of stuff he said that he told black folks and white folks about, you know. But his objective was not so much civil rights. His objective was to take over the community religiously and educationally because they bought the land down there to build his school and the way he figured he could build that school is destroy us and then he could proceed and build his school.

PO: Reverend Matthews, most people don't know about things that were happening ( ) in the 1950's or 1960's. When you were talking about the registration drive, was that led by churches?

Were there voter education classes in the churches?

DM: Well, we didn't have voter education. We worked together with the NAACP and we announced through our churches, you know, the importance of voting, the importance of registering and we cooperated. Dr. Battle was the president of the NAACP so we worked with the NAACP, through it and through the churches to disperse our knowledge and plans for registration and encourage.

Quite a few folks went up. More went up than got a chance to register because they started to getting a little fearful I guess but we got through before the fear took them over and registered. Then some of us went up to vote and they said I challenge your vote. You know how they do that challenge your vote. And we said well, if you challenge it today maybe tomorrow or someday it will be some good. So we voted anyway. But we were just a token in terms of the full onslaught of the movement. But we were preceding the movement to try to get something done on the local level.

PO: Reverend Matthews, were there other goals like municipal services or educational reforms that you were pushing for in the 1950's?

DM: Well what we really wanted, we wanted good schools and good principals and at that time we were not pushing so much for integration in the beginning. We were asking for good facilities. We didn't have lockers in our schools, student

lockers. We didn't have lunchrooms in those days. So we had to push for lunchrooms and lockers and libraries and science labs and you know the things, we pushed for those things in those days. (Interruption by telephone call.)

PO: You were talking, Reverend Matthews, about some of the goals of local...

DM: Education, yeah. We were concerned about those things in school. As I said, at that point in our history we were not pushing so much for integration as we were for quality education as we had observed it. So they sent special committees out, not just because of us but because they were trying to get around this integration and the committee made a study of Sunflower County and recommended, they had one good high school in the southern part and one good high school in the northern part of the county and Gentry was planned and they recommended it so they built Gentry High School and placed a cafeteria and finally they came up with a gym later. We didn't have gymnasium and lunchroom. But finally they came up with a good library, pretty good library. But these were some of the objectives we were seeking during those days. Because, my experience, I went through a colored high school. When I got to Morehouse I didn't know anything about the nomenclature of a compound microscope. (Laughter) So you know, you don't want kids leaving out of

school and not exposed to the basics that they should have and we were concerned about those things in those days.

PO: So you were successful in getting a black high school and better facilities built?

DM: Yeah, we were a part of it. However, I think part of it also was the ruling of May 17, 1954, part of that ruling also spurred up a lot of action on the part of the white community to actually come up with some decent educational projects that we would not have to go to their schools and they wouldn't have to come to our's I guess. That spurred it also. But those of us who had been exposed were concerned about better schools. Also we were concerned about giving teachers an opportunity. See we didn't have, if you got a master's degree you had to go to Tennessee State, Atlanta University or Southern University, out of state you know, Louisiana, Tennessee, over in Georgia or somewhere else, or New York. And there was nowhere in the state that we could get a master's degree to qualify. And someone said why didn't you go to such-and-such a place, they've got a master's degree, they've got bachelor's and doctorate degree, triple A's and we didn't have anywhere. So we started crying for some kind of institution where we could be qualified and certified to be good teachers and eventually they evolved with a master's program at Jackson State and of course Delta State and

Valley State. Of course they downgraded Valley but Valley's coming back. Valley State was there to help to give us the baccalaureate program and later they increased the master's program. Those were some things we were interested in because of our experience. You know we had, teachers had to go way out of state to get anything to qualify and white teachers could stay right here and go right to Mississippi State, Ole Miss, Mississippi Southern or wherever. Because those were not open to us in those days and it was a pretty hard way to climb out. So that was a part of the issue too.

PO: Reverend Matthews, locally what was your main method of negotiation? Were you petitioning the city council?

DM: Well what we did, we did sort of a unique thing. There were some good people in this community, white people I mean. We formed a group, we sat down and negotiated and talked about what needed to be done, what improvements needed to be made and we came to the conclusion that we were going to have to work together in the community if there was going to be a community and we formed what we called a bi-racial committee which is still intact. Bi-racial committee, black and white and of late we've made it male and female but in the beginning it was just black and white male. And we would sit down and talk about different things because we actually didn't see eye-to-eye

because there were some on the committee to say the only thing I've ever known of black folks was menial work. You know farm hands and chopping cotton and driving tractors and bailing hay and sweeping the streets. He said I've never sat down with a group of intelligent black folks. He told us that to our face.

He said I've never known that ya'll had these desires or thoughts, to let you know how important it was to sit down and just talk, just to understand that there's inspiration in black as well as in white and that there are some qualified blacks as well as qualified whites. He didn't know that until we sat down and talked together. Out of that connection, communication, we got many things. I think the first thing we did tangible because I kept crying about I want something we can put our teeth in. I want something tangible. Ideas are alright but there needs to be something tangible. I think the first thing we did constructive. We worked hard and got a young man on the post office. We didn't have a black on the post office work at all. We worked together and we got him and he's in Memphis right now. We got him in the post office and then we asked for fellahs to be able to read the meters, the water meters, the electric meters, you know, because they didn't do nothing but dig ditches and didn't do any kind of work like that. So we asked for that kind of thing and they started giving us those requests. And we started asking that some consideration be given qualified persons to work in these offices, in stores and

that kind of thing. That was before that group came in. In stores and that kind of thing and they started gradually hiring folks in the various positions. Maybe guy reading the meters and whatnot and fellahs working, because Mr. Harper asked me to work part-time as a deputy clerk in chancellor clerk's office you know. I was also asked to work on the polls and that was unheard of because when I started working on the polls I was the only black and I was called Uncle Tom by the blacks and the object of nigger lovers by the whites. (Laughter)

PO: Caught in between.

DM: Yeah, between the two. Some blacks said how did he get on there, you know, Uncle Tom. And white folks said nigger lovers put him on there. How did he get on there. I mean I was nice to them. I didn't explode. Some of the elderly white women, I would help them, you know and they finally got used to me. But I couldn't be the explosive type and get the job done as we were trying to do it. So we were successful then. After I worked so many years then I got off it and on the election commission. I'm still on the city election commission. But I'm just there now because we've had blacks in the democratic party and in the county and whatnot, state elections and whatnot but I was one of the first to assist in voting. And it was a first because we were just getting started and the first to serve on the election

commission. I wasn't so much worried about being first but the thing about it, we wanted to get something done that you could see with your eyes and it had to be done by the community. Even though the government may put an ax over your head you had to perform the job. So we got a lot done without the federal government coming in to do it for us through that bi-racial committee.

PO: Reverend Matthews, now that started before the 1960's, the bi-racial committee?

DM: Yeah, the bi-racial committee must have been, I believe we started that committee in the 1960's. Now we met together before the 1960's but we didn't have that committee intact. We met together several times. There was a man in this town by the name of John Huff. He owned a lot of property. He had shares in the GN, shares in this, shares in that. He had a Huff Drugstore uptown which is Rawls Drugstore now over on Front Street. And he was a likable person. He'd tell up front, I'm a segregationist, I'm a segregationist. He'd tell you that. But I want everybody to be treated right. That was his thing. (Laughter) So he would get the fellahs together and sit down and talk. You could talk to him anytime and he wouldn't harm you. And another great keystone in the community, white, Jack Harper, Jack E. Harper. I guess you've heard his name before

and before and before. Now if there's a genuine man in the community, Jack Harper is a genuine man. I believe he believes in right. The two of us have met together a lot of times and talked things over and tried to make approaches and he's all out for the community. He said whatever we can get, government programs that some folks didn't want, he said let's get it. If it helps the community, let's get it. And that was his idea and his philosophy. If it will help anybody, let's get it. And you are respected right at his office today. He's the same. He's real nice. He's really served a great purpose in this community. He tried to hold things together when they were about to fly apart. You've got to have some level headed persons on both sides of the railroad track to sort of keep things together. Now the only time we had to really apply real pressure, now they applied it in 1968 but it was not a justifiable application of pressure because we went to the city fathers, the boards and bi-racial committee and asked them to hire blacks in these stores except little family stores which couldn't afford it and so they started hiring them in Piggly Wiggly and Sunflower and some other larger stores they were hiring them. And the NAACP group at that time staged a boycott. They had responded to us according to our request, they were in it. But they wanted to extend the boycott and extend in the agreement the removal of two black principals from the schools but we didn't go along with that. So that was a rift in the

black community. We had a civic club, they had the NAACP. The NAACP wanted to boycott, they wanted to remove L.R. Brown and Hedikah Brown. Hedikah Brown was at the elementary school. L.R. Brown was at the high school. They wanted to remove them. Well that wasn't in the bargain.

PO: Why did they want to remove them?

DM: Well I think, there again, if you get out of the way and keep a turmoil in the community you can get a private school started. I think that was an objective to getting a private school started. And destroy the black religious leaders, destroy the black educators and then I can get a school started and you know, it would be easy. But we reneged on it so the boycott was a split-up. Part of the fellahs went with it and part of us didn't. We didn't go with it. Finally they called it off and wound up. And then the next thing we had I was a vital part of it and purposefully so because we felt that we were being mistreated and Dr. Merritt who served us about sixty years as superintendent, he applied for the superintendent position in this city which served the city twenty-six years as teacher and principal and who had earned a doctorate degree down at Mississippi Southern and was a man with impeccable record morally and otherwise in the community. And he applied and they didn't hire him. They hired Dr. Grissom from up at ( )

County. He was formerly here and they hired him for forty-five thousand dollars a year and ignored him. So the black community came together. We organized and said well if that's the way they're going to do it we just can't support it. We just won't support the downtown. And it was a success because all of us stood together.

PO: It was like a boycott of downtown?

DM: Yeah, downtown. We didn't bother the drugstore because of emergency sickness. But service stations, stores, grocery stores and everything else, a lot of folks went to Greenville and bought groceries. It was just really a success because we stood together on it. And finally we met out of Lewis Grocery Company and agreed to call it off with the idea that they were going to hire Dr. Merritt and they did hire him and he stayed until he retired. He retired last year I believe. That was the time we had the boycott because we had a qualified man in the community and we had about seventy or eighty percent, well more, about ninety percent black population in school and then you bring in a white superintendent and you've got a qualified black who had applied for it ignored, the board ignored it. So we just overrode the board with the boycott. I was in it because I thought it was right. I wasn't in it because of black or what but I thought the man applied and had been in the system that

long and had done a marvelous job and he was overlooked. And when it finally came to the end of it they hired him and that was it. Now another group tried to start a little old boycott because of the hiring of principals. No white involved, two black principals. They wanted to hire one who was working at the school, the principal. Wanted to hire the young man who worked at the junior high as principal over at the high school and a certain little old group wanted the one at the high school to be principal and some didn't want the man at the junior high school to be principle, just a little group, and they started a little boycott downtown. We didn't join it. Both of them were black. I said I'm not arguing about nobody. I taught both of them. I don't have nothing against either one. Why would I boycott? I don't have nothing against either one of them. But it was just jump up stuff and they thought we ought to join them. I don't believe in jumping in stuff just to be in it or to hurt somebody. You get in things to help somebody. It was just one of those bad moves but we brought it to a halt and everything worked out alright. They kept the one they had.

PO: Reverend Matthews, I don't want to keep you all day. I know you have a very busy schedule. I have just a few more questions. I want to make sure I have the location of the area that, you said you grew up in the Woodburn community.

DM: Right.

PO: Now that is seven miles to the...?

DM: It is about eight miles southeast of Indianola. It's across that bridge, the Sunflower river bridge going east.

PO: Now is that a plantation area?

DM: A plantation. My father was a sharecropper there for years.

PO: The other thing I was wondering about Reverend Matthews, after all the struggles that you went through here locally, now when you really began to create some changes, how did those changes manifest themselves on a day-to-day basis? For instance, take downtown Indianola. Earlier you talked about when you were growing up you had to use courtesy titles for white people when you were going into town or what have you. But now, say since early 1970's when you would go into town, what were some of the changes?

DM: Well, some of the changes were that the white merchants and businessmen didn't expect the same kind of submissiveness I'd say. They appreciated respect but they didn't look for the

submissiveness, you know, that they had been getting from the black community because youngsters were taught how to act and what to do and many of them respected elders regardless of white or black. And of course some of them now don't respect you no matter what color you are. That's a difference. But they weren't hung up on being submissive to them as they were prior to the latter years. And I think up to this day, I think they're more cautious in the circuit clerk's office, in the chancellor clerk's office, in the tax assessor's office, you've got a mixture of black and white. Just a concrete difference than what we used to have. And of course in the post office you've got black and white. Downtown in many of the stores if it's not a real small job you have some black and white working in the stores. In the plants and whatnot we do have some black managers like Mortar Line, Lewis Grocery Company. They're having a hard time now because so many youngsters don't want to work. They give the supervisor a hard time. But nevertheless we have them compared to what we used to have. All the managerial positions were once white, white male and you do have some black managers in these positions. That's a change. And it's a change in the office. And then there's a change in attitude. There's no more white drinking fountains, black drinking fountains or white entrances or black entrances in the courthouses and, you know, public buildings. All of us go in the same place in the same manner under the same conditions.

That has been changed and the same thing throughout the state transportation. We don't have to get on the back and others ride on the front. When I was going to school I had to ride on the back of the bus and the whites rode on the front. On the train you rode up front and the white folks rode on the back where you were close to that smoke and coal but now you get a seat wherever you can find one. Those are some tangible changes that we have had. And in the school systems I believe the salaries are more equitable than they were in those days because they had a - even though now in a lot of places they're not equitable. In a lot of these places they've got one list for blacks and one for whites still. Wherever they can get by with it they pay them more and pay you less. But we have come a long ways from what we used to have. The relationship is different and I think it's for the better. The qualm I have with us is that instead of us profiting by our suffering and mistakes and whatnot we've made, many of us are going backwards, blacks, into gangs and drug dealings. And of course I know we're economically depleted but we used to be in worse shape than we are now. And many of our parents as I said my father for example, didn't do it. So somehow we are going to have to gain the virility or power, the will or some way to refrain from some of this stuff if we're going to be successful. Because in the final analysis what we're getting is gangs on this side but the gangs don't go over there. They're bad on this side but they're

not bad over there. So what we're doing, we're destroying our own community. And that's not helping us any because if we get too many drug burnouts in school, drugs and gangs in school, if you're a good student they want to intimidate you so you won't get your lessons so they'll look good. That kind of stuff is going on and fighting and shooting, and killing up each other. Black on black crime is just appalling the way we have experienced it the last few years. I think this good time ought to be utilized as an advantage for us to get a good education, morally get our ducks in line and become church members, community builders, educated and sharing one with the other and family builders. This would do us much more good than what we are doing now. As I said in the initial remarks, what I think is happening, we are not relaying to the youngsters what has happened before he got here and how he got where he is and the suffering that has gone on. I think that's one thing you've got to give the Jews credit. They let their youngsters know, you haven't been here always and what we have come through. We've got to relay somehow and communicate with them that you're not just here, you've got a history. And if you don't know where you came from there's a possibility you don't know where you are and you don't know where you're going. (Laughter) You just came from where you were and you're here, now how do you know where you're going over there if you don't know where you came from. I think we need to communicate to them where they came

from and how they got here and it was no picnic, was no ice cream eating. It was rough. And I mean I look at it, I don't think we should cry no more than anybody else. Jews had a hard time. The white folks had a hard time. A lot of them came over here as indenture servants. Am I right? They didn't just come over here and take over. They had to suffer. Then the Indians caught the devil. They fought the Indians until they took this country from the Indians and all kinds of suffering was going on. So we are not the only folks who have suffered but I think we ought to profit by our suffering and not stay mad with other folks. That's my personal position, my philosophy. That you smile and the world will smile with you. But don't forget because freedom is preserved by eternal vigilance. You can't ever let up. Just because we've won a few civil rights battles, you don't give up. But you don't get mad with folks. You keep doing your job. That's my position. Do my job so I don't have to get mad with you. I think we'll have to do a lot of educating and praying and studying and setting the example along those lines.

PO: Reverend Matthews, through all of the struggles that you have been through and led throughout your life, what have been the main things that have inspired you to keep on striving?

DM: Well, I have a strong belief, religious belief, in God and

in the biblical statements that are made and the historical movement of God in the life of Israel and in the rest of the people of God. And I have had certain experiences in my personal life that I have followed and they have given me success. When I say success I don't mean just dollars and dimes, I mean success in relationships, success in serving and success in being peaceful and living in a peaceful community and having a reasonable amount of health and strength too. And successful in being influential among, I've helped a lot of folks, you know. Youngsters, some times they come back and say what you told me ten years ago, twenty years ago come to truth, come to pass. They say I believe it. This is the kind of things that inspires me, that keeps me going on. And naturally I'm a minister of the gospel and I'm in the pulpit every Sunday and my own sermons help to inspire me because they inspire others. If I can't believe in the God I preach about to the other folks then I don't need to preach. That's another inspiration. I have my folks laughing sometimes. I say now if I tell you about Daniel in the lion's den and God took care of him and Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace, God took care of them, God took care of Moses across the Red Sea and the Israelites and then I can't trust a dime out of every dollar on the table for God, that's no example for you. I don't believe in it. If I can't try to sacrifice for Him and they have done all this and I'm going to preach to you about Him, then I ought to be some

example of what I'm talking about. And that's an inspiration to me as well as to them and I keep going. I don't go around hating nobody. I can't carry it in me. I can't go around hating folks. If you do something to me wrong I'll just tell you that you're wrong, you mistreated me and I don't like it, you owe me an apology and if you give it okay and if you don't I'm through with it and I go home and go to bed. But if I go around with blood on my hands destroying folks I can't do that.

I can't have a clear conscience. This guy said how do you look so good. I said well I go to bed at night, I don't go around mistreating folks and I go to sleep. (Laughter) I enjoy life and I don't worry about what nobody has. If he didn't take it from me, God bless him. Some folks, if you get something they get mad with you. Get a new car, new suit, a new house or something. I don't get mad if you've got a palace and a helicopter landing on ...