
PETERSBURG
VOICES OF CIVIL RIGHTS:
THE ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW OF THE REVEREND ANDREW J. WHITE, SR.

conducted by

Hermanze Fauntleroy

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HALASZ REPORTING & VIDEOCONFERENCE

P.O. Box 1644

Richmond, VA 23218-1644

(804) 708-0025

Transcribed by: George M. Halasz, RDR

(Interview of Rev. Andrew J. White, Sr.,
conducted by Hermanze Fauntleroy.)

BY MR. FAUNTLEROY:

Q Today is March 2nd, 2007. I am Hermanze Fauntleroy, and I will be interviewing the Reverend Andrew White who is currently the pastor at Zion Baptist Church in Petersburg. Reverend White, in terms of your entry into the City of Petersburg, which I understand is somewhere around 1963, what do you envision the conditions in the city and the environment in the city to have been at that time?

A Mr. Fauntleroy, thank you so very much. I came to Petersburg in April of 1963 as a minister of Zion Baptist Church, and the movement was already in progress. There was -- there'd already been -- some things had already been put in place and some things had already been done in terms of the library, and you know the story behind the library, and the lunch counter, some sit-ins had taken place and so forth.

So when I came to Petersburg the time was ripe with excitement, seeing some possibilities of some new days and some possibilities of some progress, and people were ready for leadership and leadership was being provided, had been blessed with

leadership, but the question was how do we do this, what else do we need to do, where do we go from here? We've done some things, what's next?

As I began to look at that it was not long before -- a few months before there was the march on Washington, and I was involved in getting the transportation for that, and that helped kind of sparkle the idea, because so many people had been familiar with Martin Luther King and the whole movement, and the Petersburg Improvement Association had already been in place, and that kind of added fuel to the fire to saying, we can't stop here, we must keep going. And that was the impetus that kind of helped to crystalize what we needed to do. And one component that we needed was to be sure that the schools, and political arena were taken care of, and also we had to be very, very sure that we had to do some things for housing. Those were the ideas.

Q In relationship to what you just indicated, do you recall what may have taken place in reference to moving the city in the direction that you have at least alluded to?

A Well, there were several groups already in place. There were several concerned citizens groups. Later on there became a group called the

Petersburg Voter Education Committee for voting and politics, as far as that is concerned. But there was a -- there was some organization -- there was still some boycotts in Petersburg, and one of the big things was to -- how can we marshal the forces and unify those forces so that we could move together?

And since nobody had a complete blueprint for how this should be done, some of what we had to do was kind of trial and error. We wanted to be sure we got involved in jobs, and of course Bread Basket, Operation Bread Basket that Martin Luther King got started, along with Jesse Jackson, we had to tie into that. How could we find jobs in Petersburg? How could we get the schools integrated in Petersburg? How could we get a part, a place at the table in the political arena in Petersburg?

So we began to try out with some -- we had some boycotts, we had some -- they were very successful, we had a boycott on the city that was successful. Theaters and lunch counters and all, we did some of that. But the idea was consolidating and unifying persons so that we could move forward together.

Q What do you think the impact of what you

described was on the community and the city at that time?

A Well, it was very positive, because people accepted the leadership. They were very enthusiastic. They were very cooperative. The entire community, churches, organizations, individuals, marshaled their forces together. We had several mass meetings. That was one of our means of communication, and a very successful means of communication, because whenever issues were at hand, we got the people together, at a church or in some place, and we talked about the issues, and people had an opportunity to air what they thought.

And so it was very, very necessary for us to keep in contact with our base. And that mass meeting became the media whereby -- the medium whereby we kept communication. And we would plan our strategies. We had smaller groups that would implement those strategies, and we reported back to people from time to time, and that kept the unity flowing because people needed to be on board to know what was doing so we could solicit their cooperation and their input.

Q During that period of time do you think that there was a need, and did we implement the need

in terms of getting more involved in the political scene in Petersburg?

A Very definitely, because we realized that some of the steps that needed to be taken had to be taken politically, so there was beginning -- I remember we had a council on race relations to come up one time. We developed that. And that was hopefully a step that start us in the direction. There were some political overtures that fell out of that, but at least it got started.

And then Mr. Joe Owens, and I know his name has been called many times, he made himself available as a candidate for city council. And he was able, because of some things happened, he was able to get a seat on city council.

And then we began to realize that we were at the beginning of some political power that we hadn't utilized before, not in the same -- so that was in '60 -- '64, I believe it was Mr. Owens was elected city council. And then there came Mr. Fauntleroy, yourself, Mr. Fauntleroy, and you made yourself available to -- as a candidate for city council, and the city mobilized behind you and got you elected to city council and that was a real show of power.

And for the first time, well, maybe for the first time, the powers that be began to see that there was very definitely some clout in the community because we had elected you as a member of city council along with Mr. Owens. And so this was -- this helped us to get at the table where some things that were necessary could be done, and one of them that was most outstanding -- many were done, but one was housing, because there were some people even in positions where they should have known better, who claimed that Petersburg didn't need any housing. And the truth of the matter, that Petersburg was one of the blightest cities on the eastern seaboard.

And you, Mr. Fauntleroy, was one who introduced the legislation that brought about the beginning of the Petersburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and as a result of that the highrise came, and the Gill Street area was cleaned up, all of that because of politics because you were there and you could speak on behalf of your clientele. And that was very important, getting a foot in the door politically was very, very important, along with other things, but that was very important.

Q With that in mind, do you think the community itself was ready to get involved in those kinds of activities, and did they support it?

A They supported it, they got involved and they made themselves available to participate on the various commissions as they were being appointed and being suggested, because before that time there were very few places that appointed blacks to position, but because we were at the table, people were ready and people offered themselves to become members of various boards that were available, and they showed by that that they were not only ready, but they were prepared to take their places in the development of the entire city. So they were very cooperative, very helpful, and very available and very supportive.

Q Do you recall whether or not our religious community was involved in any of that?

A It was very definitely so because, as I said, all facets of the community, the business people in the community, the church leaders and the churches were involved, and the grass roots were involved, the students were involved in it, so all of that worked together.

And some of the example is that some

of the leadership came from pastors. There was Wyatt Tee Walker, legendary Wyatt Tee Walker. There was Reverend Dr. Milton Reid and Reverend Dr. Williams, R. G. Williams, at the various churches, and then the Clergy Association, and the Baptist Ministers Conference all were involved.

Churches were primarily the places where meeting took place. They gave their support, the members of the churches gave their support, and of course the movement, as you well know, the movement started at the church, and it was at Zion Church in 1960 when there was some arrests made because that was -- Petersburg was coming together to organize, and it had the blessings of, the leadership of and the support of the church, the preachers and the church members and other facets of the community as well. It was -- cooperation was a key word and people did really work together, and that was the genius that kept this thing going and made the success.

Q I realize that the library situation in terms of integrating the library started prior to your arrival in the City of Petersburg, but do you think that that particular issue had anything to do with becoming really involved in the whole civil

rights era?

A Very important. You may call it somewhat of a kind of a first step. And you flex your muscles and see the results, and you learn some things and you try some strategies and found out that they worked pretty well, and that kind of moved you to the next stage. So it was the beginning of a movement, a progressive movement, so it went from the library, it went to the lunch counters, it went to the boycotts of various facilities in the city. And as we picked up momentum, we found we could do more and more things, so it was kind of a building-block situation.

The library was very fundamental in getting it started because people realized that they could do, and they realized they had the ability to do, and then of course while this was going on the movement throughout the south and throughout the nation, through the NAACP, and through SCLC, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, all of that helped to inspire people locally because the leadership was coming -- the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, coming from church, and the people said, look, if they can do it in Montgomery, we can do it in Petersburg.

And so it -- that -- the movement outside of the area helped to fan the fires and fuel for here, but -- so the school -- the lunch counters -- the library was probably -- you know better than I do, was probably the beginning, but it was certainly a helpful part of it.

Q How do you think the community, if you will, accepted this change that was beginning to take place, and how were they involved, or were they readily involved? And I'm talking about basically the citizenry of the City of Petersburg.

A Well, change comes slowly. Some persons are kind of leery of change taking place. But in Petersburg, I saw and sensed a readiness. It was not the total city because it never is a total city. There were some persons who didn't want to, quote, rock the boat, let things stay where they are, but there were enough people who were aware and conscious to carry this on.

And one of the important elements of it was that there were a lot of young people involved. Students were involved, both in the high school here and in the lower situation, and some from the university, Virginia State and so forth. So it was a young people's movement, too. And so --

the older persons who didn't always quite see it didn't stand in the way of it happening. Some stood on the sideline and some were very much involved.

They may have had some misgivings somewhere along the line, but they were not afraid to say, look, it's been all the time, it has not happened, maybe this is an opportunity for it to happen, so I'm not going to block it, so they were not blocking it. Some had second questions sometime, but because of the youthful fervor that came about, it was enough to say that we had a pretty good support, in fact, excellent support and very heavy involvement throughout the town, throughout the city.

Q The Brown versus the Board of Education of course had taken place several years before the period that we're really talking about, and Petersburg really still hadn't done anything in terms of following that mandate from the Supreme Court. What's your opinion in reference to the impact of that within the City of Petersburg at that time?

A Well, that was another phase of the development. That was -- all of it was a part of one big effort, but that was a part of it, because

there were parents, and your family was involved in that, John Cole family and Alice Cole family and others who were bold enough to say, my children will be involved. The children wanted to be involved. And they put themselves on the line to register for integration and so forth, as it was happening in some other places as well in Virginia.

You know, we had the Farmville situation, the schools closing in Farmville, and Warren County I believe, another situation. But that was also a part of the impetus. So the parents of those pioneering children are to be commended along with the children themselves who said -- they put themselves physically, personally in the place and say, look, I am going to do this. We saw it happening elsewhere, but people in Petersburg had the same courage, and the same determination and the same drive and so those people who started out, those pioneers, those brave, daring ones inspired others to say, now, if they can do that, we can at least be supportive. They are into this thing. They are helping all of us. So it was that kind of effect on the community.

Those people were -- those people were appreciated because of the daring steps that

they were willing to take, and that was very important to not -- to keep the movement going, because it was many facets; schools was one of it, political was one of it, housing was one of it, economic, and just, say, getting jobs during that time, we were able to locate jobs in places in which blacks had not worked before. We saw them coming up as cashiers in some places. We saw them being placed in certain strategic positions that they hadn't been in before, and that was a part.

So economic, political, housing, education, all of those factors working together bring about -- and the fearlessness, and the courage that people showed, and the leadership, the creative leadership that was shown throughout this. It was really a marvelous thing taking place right in dear, old Petersburg, Virginia.

Q When you assumed the pastorship of Zion Baptist Church, as I remember what was Petersburg General Hospital at that time, really was still segregated.

A Right.

Q And there was a location within the hospital, of course, where --

A Second floor, yeah.

Q -- blacks or African Americans were sent to, if you will, in terms of being cared for. Sometime after that, and of course you became quite involved with the Hospital Authority, what do you think the atmosphere within the hospital in reference to bringing about that kind of change, and what did you see when you became directly involved as far as the authority is concerned?

A Well, the hospital like most of the other facets in Petersburg was a little slow to move. As you indicated, there was an area like the second floor that was designated, quote, for blacks with the exception I think of maternity may have been a little bit different, maternity ward, but other than that the blacks were on the second floor.

And once -- when I went up to visit people from my church in the community, all I had to do was go to second floor for the most part. I didn't have to go to the third or fourth. That's where they were. And there was some dissatisfaction in that, of course. And the same fervor that was making people look at education a different way was also making them look at the hospital in a different way, and especially -- and I believe, if I'm not mistaken, there was a Hill Burton fund, if I am

correct, Hill Burton fund that helped to finance the hospital that made -- made some funds available to the hospital.

That was government money. And government money comes from taxes, and taxes comes from everybody so, therefore, the Hill Burton fund was money coming from blacks as well. So how could you use black money to segregate blacks in the facility? That was in the background of people's thinking. So people were ready to push on to see how that could be eliminated.

I remember one instance, and let me call the name of Milton Reid, Dr. Milton Reid, went up to the hospital because they couldn't find a certain room for a certain person, and he went around in his robe, in his pulpit robe, found a space that was vacant, it wasn't on the designated black area, but it was vacant, it was a vacant, and he said, well, here's a room right here. Why can't you go right there?

And of course the reason was that the person was black and they are not supposed to be in part of the hospital. That became news, and that showed the absurdity of such movement. Now, that took place in the '60 -- '65, '66, along in that

category.

And then, of course, we were able to get some person on the hospital authority. James Jimerson, James Duvall, remember those, on the Hospital Authority. And they had a seat on -- at least they were on the inside. Later on there were some other blacks added. I went on the Hospital Authority in '88, 1988.

So some of that -- the hospital had been integrated by that time, '88. But there were still pockets of resistance and pockets of subtle kind of situations. We could address some of them. Some of them we could not address. But over -- we had about six members at one time. Out of the 15 member authority, we had about six members were black. And we didn't have a voting block of any kind. We tried to work with the authority. We tried to promote our ideas and promote the ideas, and they were pretty well accepted.

I believe Jimerson became Chairman of the Hospital Authority at one time. Tom Briggs was a Chairman of the Hospital Authority at one time.

I was the Chairman of the Hospital Authority at one time. Grady Powell was Chairman of the Hospital Authority at one time. And as you

became -- and Vice Chairman before that time. So that gave you some chance to have direct impact. It wasn't headline grabbing. It wasn't anything that grabbed the headline, but there were some things you could do because you were put in certain positions, and that happened and I think that -- I saw in the paper today, and I haven't finished reading the paper today, that the Cameron Fund has just -- has just distributed a million plus dollars to various kind of agencies in Petersburg.

That money came because the hospital was sold, and the agencies that are receiving money are very, very happy that this money is available. This is not the corpus of the money. This is the interest that comes on the money that came from the sale of the hospital. And you know Petersburg, and I won't go into that story, but had a lot of opposition to this thing and so forth, but now everybody is happy to receive -- and there are so many other benefits I won't go into, but that's just one idea of a forward movement that met some resistance, considerable resistance from several people, but now that it has been done and the new hospital development over there in Petersburg, and from that other economic initiatives are being

taken, everybody said, oh, isn't this a wonderful thing? Couldn't quite see that ten years ago.

But the hospital has played a good part, and it has been very helpful. Now we're -- in the next two years from our sitting here this afternoon we'll be into the state of the art, brand new hospital in the City of Petersburg. Aren't we proud of that? Yes, we are.

Q Well, that obviously is a real plus. There's no question about that. And I would think, and just maybe you will comment on this, but I would think that that particular situation would certainly generate some employment for the City of Petersburg in terms of a new hospital. As I understand it, there's a rehabilitation hospital that has come about as a result of that, and I'm sure other businesses --

A Another clinic facility is already -- is being built down there now. And of course there are other economic -- on Crater Road, on South Crater Road there's coming -- so there will be job fallouts directly from the hospital. I mean, when I say fallout, I mean employment opportunity.

For example, in the construction itself, just the mere -- people who are employed to

do the construction, that's jobs. So there will be other jobs available to people. But not only that, there will be, shall I say, ancillary jobs, jobs coming up in other areas as a result of the hospital having done what it has done, there will be other economic initiatives taken that will also provide jobs. So the hospital provided directly, and then the impetus that the hospital has on promoting and encouraging other economic development will be jobs, too. So will be kind of a first, first line and then those that are -- will come in the wake of that.

Q Speaking about employment in the City of Petersburg, and in the past we have had some problems in terms of -- and probably still have some problems in terms of fair employment, if you will. But what's your opinion in reference to the status of employment as far as blacks are concerned in the city as it relates to the types of jobs that people can really, really, really benefit from?

A Well, you look at the job market in Petersburg, and you look at potential workers, most industry would want to be established where there are an abundance of potential workers. We have to work with our schools, because they are basic. They

are very basic. They are basic in equipping people be able to do things.

All right, so if the job pool, if the available person to work is not but so strong then that will not be encouraging for people, industry to locate here. We have to take a good look at the work force to be sure there's a quality work force, and people who will have a good work ethic, that's very important.

Now, and of course there has been in the past sometime discriminatory practices in job opportunities, we know that. Some of it has been overcome. But we have some work to do to be sure that we have some qualified -- a qualified pool of potential workers who have a good work ethic.

And I emphasize that, because that's where our emphasis needs to be placed now so that our young men and our young ladies will be willing to work once they have gotten jobs. They will be prepared and willing to work and stay with those jobs and will be accounted on for coming to work. That's an area that I personally have a lot of interest in, because I see that we haven't always done that as much as we should, and that has an impact. People don't want to come to places where

the work force is not good. So that will help to improve opportunities for employment, if persons know that you are available, you are qualified, you are willing, and you do a good job. That's very important.

And I think our schools can help us in that, and any other way that we can find to help to improve our thinking about why and how we can do a good job as employees, that's something we need to work on.

Q There have been situations I think where many of our young people have left the City of Petersburg because of lack of employment, and maybe to some degree because they have not been in their opinions treated fairly in terms of several positions. Based on some of your recent comments there in terms of developing the quality employee, do you think that that is more important now than having situations where persons are being discriminated against?

A Well, there's some discrimination, no question about that, but both are important, the elimination of subtle and outright discrimination, the removal of both, and then developing a new pride in our city.

I know of many young people who have finished our church, have gone elsewhere to work because of the economic situation here in Petersburg or the concept of how Petersburg looks, or the attitude of what kind of city it is, whether there is crime, all that's important. But these young people will be glad to come back and with the initiative on Fort Lee and the growth at Fort Lee, that's going to bring about a lot of changes in Petersburg because people will be coming here.

And some of those who are indigenous with Petersburg or have come out of Petersburg will be happy to come back. And Petersburg will become a thriving community again with good jobs, good living conditions, healthy living conditions, wholesome living conditions. And I believe it's coming back and it is going to be a mighty strong city economically and in other ways.

And I think that while Fort Lee is growing and people are coming in the next four -- three to four to five years, many people, impact of maybe 7,000, or 10,000, I'm not sure of the exact idea, but they are coming here, they'll be working here, and to provide an environment not only for the ones who are coming, but for those who have some

connection with Petersburg already, I think they'll be willing to come back. If they can find good jobs, good housing, good schools, they'll come back because Petersburg can be a mighty fine place to live, as fine as any on the eastern seaboard.

So I think that's a good thing that all of us, the entire community needs to work on so that we can make it healthy, and wholesome and attractive.

Q If I might step back just for a moment here, we haven't touched on this, but we lost during the period of the civil rights era, at least beginning in 1963 with John Kennedy, we lost three people, Kennedy, the two Kennedy brothers, and Martin Luther King. Do you think that those assassinations, if you will, had any significant impact on this country?

A On the country, on the world, on Petersburg, on people. There are some -- there are many persons who saw them as great leaders, the president, and the would be -- his brother and, of course, Martin Luther King, for whom holidays have been made, and schools have been named, and there's a new respect for him among people who didn't think so much of the idea at first, but after they have

gotten now about 40 years or so away from that, about 40 years away from his death, I think it was '68 -- died in '68 I believe it was, now we have gotten that far away from it and they evaluate who the man was, they see that he stood for some very, very fine principles that are lasting.

What he was about, he said he wanted black folks, and he talked about the -- that type of thing -- and by the way, you remember that it was in Petersburg, at Virginia State University, that Martin Luther King came and made his anti-war, anti-poverty, anti-racism speech, right here in Petersburg. And some people say he's not mind -- he didn't -- he didn't have anything to do with it, he ought to leave that to somebody else.

But he touched on issues that were important, and many people have begun to see that what he touched on was for all of us, not for the sixties only, but they are still current. So they have made an -- the death of those three persons did make an impact then, and it still makes an impact. It is still having this repercussion, and for good. So many persons have been inspired to do things.

Martin Luther King and others have inspired people to take positions of leadership that

may not have come out of the woodwork before, but they have done that because of the courage and the inspiration of those three leaders, along with others. And I think we can consider ourselves blessed, because they were unselfish and they were leaders of dedication and commitment, and of essence, substance. So they are impacting us even today.

Q What is your opinion in reference to basically what needs to be done in the City of Petersburg to make us what at one time we were labeled as an all-American city?

A Okay, the answer to that is first we look at what were the elements that made us an all-American city? Pull them out, look at them again, look at the elements that made us the -- and then ask ourselves a question; do we have those elements present now? Okay, if we look at the elements that made us an all-American city, one was there was some unity, a great deal of it, that was very important to the movement. All right? That's an element that needs to be regained, togetherness.

A second element that made us an all-American city was pride. We had pride and respect for ourselves and for others. And in

pride -- and in that pride, and out of that respect that meant that our behavior was in according to that pride, our respect for our neighbor so we weren't really -- we weren't interested in killing off our neighbor or robbing our neighbor or scamming our neighbor. Pride was very important in -- that made us an all-American city.

Openness. We were not totally open though we were getting there. We put our emphasis on how can we open up the city so that everybody can participate, so it's available to everybody. That same kind of openness needs to be there again.

A fourth element that made us an all-American city is sacrifice. Sacrifice. People gave of themselves, their leadership, and their ideal and they were not looking for pay for it.

Mr. Fauntleroy, you know. Sacrifice. You couldn't have been a member of city council and the mayor of the city unless you sacrificed, put your own family and yourself sometimes in jeopardy because you wanted to do it for somebody else, and everybody else followed that same pattern, serving on boards, serving as member of city council, sometimes that's thankless, serving on the various commissions that are available, people out there

giving, and giving and giving because we sacrifice. That made us an all-American city. All right.

It's those very same elements. We can go back and discuss them all and say, what was it? Here they are. And go right back to them and -- now I know times have changed some, but sacrifice doesn't change. It's the same thing. Cooperation doesn't change. Pride doesn't change. I don't care how many years happen. So we need to go back to those things that made us an all-American city, pull them out and promote them again, and I guarantee you we'll be back as an all-American city again.

Q My next question, and I guess maybe the last point that I would raise here, and you spoke very specifically I think about five points, do you think there's room for our religious community to become involved in helping the citizenry to recognize the fact that that's what is needed, and that there may be something within that religious community that can be done to help cause that to happen?

A Very definitely, sir. Let me speak about something in particular. All right. In 1969, 1969, in Petersburg, there came into being what we now

know as Downtown Churches United, because there was a need to promote togetherness, and there was a need for us to do together what we couldn't do separately, and so churches came together to do that. They met together and they are still meeting together.

As a result of that, that organization, Downtown Churches United became the means by which understanding was promoted among people, togetherness. And some of the elements that we have spoken about would not have taken place had not this forum of togetherness been there, this anchor there. It is because of that organization that Gillhaven exists today, a housing facility, been there 25, nearly 30 years because churches put up the seed money and made a joint application for housing. This is so basic, housing. Churches did it.

Okay. When Downtown Churches, the members of Downtown Churches worked to promote the unified hope, we call it the Hope Center, even now, what is it looking at? It is looking at a providing work incentive, assistance to people, counseling. It is kind of -- is to be a one-stop shopping place for people who have need. Downtown Churches working

there even now, I mean as we speak. That's in process. The church has always been there. The church provided much of the background for, quote, the movement of the sixties.

Why is it that SCLC is called Southern Christian? The Southern Christian churches were involved in it. Preachers were leaders. Now sometimes today -- preachers are doing fine. Maybe not doing all they could be doing, because they were more identified -- some of them have gone to the mega church and this kind of thing, and they have not -- have not always been available at grass-root organizations kinds of things. But even now, if it's going to move it has to be moved but the help and the leadership of churches and preachers, it has been important. It is important. And it's hardly -- we can hardly envision it developing, coming to be, come into being unless that take place. Yeah, churches.

The commissions that we've been on, you know, for example the hospital authority, the counseling service that used to be on Liberty Street, preachers were involved. The hospital authority, there were some preachers on there, two of us, Grady Powell and Jack White were on

there with -- we had to give up hours, and hours, and hours and nights and day, time, in order for that to be done. And it takes clergy involvement.

As I get older and get closer to retirement age, I have some misgivings about whether -- who is going to step up to the plate, who is going to be made available. Are we going to bury ourselves within our own churches? And our own churches need help and leadership. That's very important.

But the clergy has some obligation to the community outside of his parish, outside of his church, outside of that -- the narrow concerns of his church. Togetherness. And I hope that would be forthcoming. If so, it will make me very happy.

Q Then would it be safe to say that there really is room for outreach programs?

A Outreach programs, and many of them are in existence. I can name churches. I know them. I know who they are. They are providing -- they are providing fuel assistance, clothing, food, help even now. I mean, I'm not talking about what they did for Katrina. That was all churches did that. That was kind of -- not a one time, but it was a big thing, but I'm talking about day to day, churches

that are open on certain days for people to come in to receive help. I'm not talking just about Zion Baptist Church, but it happened to be Zion Baptist Church, on Thursdays they have been providing help and have been doing so for 20 years.

There are others that I won't go into naming them all, but there are other churches just as viable. The clothes car is one. There are some that are known for their outreach, so there must be outreach. The -- and the faith-based initiative, well, that's okay. I haven't gotten into that so far yet, because I got to be sure the political or -- political ramifications may be a little more than -- but anyhow, that that can do some good, too. Faith-based assistance at the grass roots. Very, very simply, churches always been involved in American culture and American society, and in community, and that's still needed.

So at the church, we want -- we want some pie in the sky in the sweet by and by, and we want some food in the cupboard in the nasty here and now, we need both, so the church not only has to keeps its focus above, but it has to keep its focus here.

Q Then we could, I would think, safely say

that the growth of the City of Petersburg and the togetherness that we're talking about that is needed can in fact be enhanced by the church?

A Greatly so. Enhanced, promoted, by the church. Still an anchor, still needed. There are other components as well, but that's very important, because this is where people assemble from time to time, and in their houses of faith, in their chapels and their synagogues and so forth, there's still a meeting. And if their religious outlook means something to them personally, it has to involve how they relate to their fellow man and how they consider the conditions of their fellow man, because you see that's what the church is all about.

I was hungry and they gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and they gave me something to drink. I was naked and you clothed me. I was in prison and you came to see me. I was a stranger and you took me in. That's the church's mandate. And when it follows that it involves people, and people believe in it, people support the church, support the community and everybody prospers.

Q Well, Reverend Andrew White, I think you've added considerably, very positively to what

we're trying to do here with our program in reference to building a story as it relates to what happened over the years, and where we need to go, and what we need to do to get there, so I'm very appreciative of the fact you took the time today to come and share with us, and to be with us, and provide some very significant input to this whole process.

A Thank you, sir. It's my pleasure. I like to talk. You know that. I think you are doing a good job. This is a very vital and important piece that you are doing, because we must know where we've been in order to determine where we need to go. And I commend you.

Q I think that's a very positive close out point right there.

A Thank you so much.

Q Thank you very much.

A Uh-huh.